

BREAKTHROUGH

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DEFEAT U.S.
NEOCOLONIALIST
SCHEMES IN
PALESTINE
AND SOUTHERN
AFRICA!



SOLIDARITY
WITH
NATIONAL
LIBERATION
STRUGGLES

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EDITORIAL STATEMENT

Anti-imperialist Struggle Sharpening; PFOC Self-criticism

PFOC NATIONAL COLLECTIVE

In the months since the last issue of **BREAKTHROUGH**, the contradictions between national liberation struggles and imperialism have become more explosive. The Patriotic Front of Zimbabwe has liberated nearly 2/3 of Zimbabwe through its national liberation war and is close to total victory despite neo-colonialist maneuvers of the US, Britain and the Smith regime to impose Smith's "internal settlement" on the Zimbabwean people. The PLO has escalated the armed struggle against Israel, demonstrating to the world that the "solution" to Palestinian oppression will not be found in negotiating sessions between Carter, Begin and Sadat. At a very heavy price, the Palestinians have made it clear that peace can never be achieved by excluding Palestinian leadership or selling out self-determination for Palestine. In Nicaragua, mass struggle has erupted against the brutal, US-backed Somoza regime with massive strikes, protests and armed actions led by the FSLN. And in Puerto Rico, the revolutionary movement for independence has moved into a new stage with nationwide strikes and growing armed activity such as the bombing of the San Juan Airport and the takeover by revolutionary forces of a police station in Manatí—events which have all been whited-out by the US bourgeois media.

Despite Jimmy Carter's stepped-up attempts to implement a strategy that masks imperialist domination with neo-colonialism and diplomatic maneuver, national liberation movements around the world are cutting through this cover and are revealing the real contradictions at issue.

In the face of such advances, a new expanded front of imperialism's repressive strategies has been opened up. The well-orchestrated campaign, developed in recent months, against "terrorism" is an attempt to discredit and destroy revolutionary freedom fighters and provide the basis for promoting neo-colonialism. Anti-terrorism, along with Carter's selective interpretation of "human rights" has become a leading weapon for the suppression of national liberation. This campaign justifies the escalation of imperialism's terrorist programs in the name of "anti-terrorism." The guerrilla fighters of the Patriotic Front are maligned as attackers of nuns and are blamed for the slaughter of Black people actually carried out by the Rhodesian regime. This serves as the pretext for bloody assaults on Zimbabwean refugee camps in Mozambique. Israel mounts a full-scale invasion of Lebanon as a response to what is labeled the inhuman terrorism of the PLO. South Moluccans struggling for world recognition of their nation's colonial situation are murdered by the Dutch army.

HEIGHTENING CONTRADICTIONS FOR IMPERIALISM

As the contradictions of imperialism heighten, armed anti-imperialist movement is on the rise within oppressor nations as well. The anti-terrorist weapon is hauled out to smash these movements which are threatening imperialism's base of support in the working classes of oppressor nations. In answer to the politics of negotiation and collaboration led by

revisionist European Communist Parties, the armed actions of the Red Brigades in Italy and the Red Army Faction in Germany are exposing the truth that imperialist relations cannot be altered through a *peaceful* transition to State power. The Italian and German States have lashed out violently against these fighters to suppress this movement by any means necessary. However, tens of thousands of European youth took to the streets demonstrating mass support for these comrades, despite the heavy repression in Germany which has resulted in the murder of Red Army fighters.

As national liberation wars develop, and imperialism mounts its genocidal counter-offensive, the forces of revisionism on a world and national scale are actively colluding with imperialism to hold back and attack these struggles. All politics which preach peace, conciliation and negotiation with imperialism are clearly exposed as phony covers for active collaboration with the status quo. The Soviet-led revisionist politics are particularly dangerous. Under the guise of socialism, these politics define peaceful transition and detente as strategies for fighting imperialism in order to serve the objectives of the Soviet Union. This is sharply exposed by Soviet moves in the Horn of Africa which are designed to smash genuine national liberation struggles, like those of the Eritrean people, in the name of supporting revolution. We cannot act in solidarity with national liberation unless we strengthen our understanding of how revisionism works hand-in-hand with neo-colonialist and imperialist strategies to attack national liberation movements world-wide.

The bourgeois media tries to mask the reality of imperialism as a worldwide system by dissociating heightening contradictions within current US borders from worldwide anti-imperialist struggle. The falseness of such a picture is confronted by the real growth and gains of national liberation struggles within the US in the past period, at the same time as national liberation is advancing worldwide. The consolidating strength of the Black revolutionary nationalist movement at this time is not separate from the gains of African liberation struggles on the continent of Africa. The unconditional release of Andres Figueroa Cordero, one of the five Puerto Rican Nationalist prisoners, and the freedom that several Puerto Rican and Mexicano/Chicano grand jury resisters have won, are closely linked to the

developing liberation movements in Latin America.

The response of the US imperialist State to national liberation within US borders contains the same basic components of outright aggression and neo-colonialism accompanied by stepped-up campaigns to maintain a base of support in the oppressor nation working class. The State moves to execute Imani (slave name Johnny Harris), one of the Atmore-Holman Brothers imprisoned in Alabama, at the same time as John Briggs, right-wing California Senator, is trying to win mass public support for his initiative reinstituting the death penalty. Chicano/Mexicano peoples have been experiencing intensified attacks in their communities and on the border. Reactionary mobilizations taking place throughout California against affirmative action, busing, public education and against abortion and gay rights are meant to provide a political climate which will support COINTELPRO-type moves against national liberation movements. When Joseph Waller, chairman of the African People's Socialist Party, was out on the West Coast making a speaking tour to build the work of the APSP in California, there were shots fired during his speech at a public forum focusing on African Internationalism. Nine days later, Waller, and another comrade, Aziza Ayoluwa, were arrested on phony charges of passing a counterfeit \$5.00 bill. Because of protests from around the country, the State was forced to drop the charges.

SHARPER CHOICES FOR THE OPPRESSOR NATION WORKING CLASS

In spite of imperialism's strategy for the oppressor nation working class, world crisis is having a definite impact on political movement within the US white working class. At this time, the contradiction between the progressive and revolutionary potential of the oppressor nation working class, and its ties to white and male supremacy—historic blocks to revolution—is reaching a new and sharper level.

In the face of active, organized efforts to mobilize white working class women on a white and male supremacist basis, masses of white women, with the leadership of Third World women, dealt a blow to the State and right-wing's plans at the IWY Convention last November. In actively supporting demands for

Native American sovereignty, for affirmative action, for abortion and gay rights and against forced sterilization and Carter's repressive welfare plan, white women challenged key aspects of the current state offensive aimed at tying white working class women to the structures of white and male supremacy. However, the choice between actively building on the advances of IWY or retreating into more limited, opportunist political definitions is now before the women's movement. Consolidating the political direction of IWY will only be possible with the development of a more conscious anti-imperialist politics and leadership within the women's movement.

The contradictions before the oppressor nation working class are sharply exposed in the coalminers' strike, which went on for months despite Carter and UMW leadership efforts to force a sell-out contract down the coalminers' throats. This massive strike against exploitative, unsafe working conditions and for the right to strike was a response to the worsening conditions impacting on the oppressor nation working class, and exposes the growing level of explosive contradiction between the working class of the oppressor nation and the ruling class of the US imperialist State.

However, the critical struggle before the coalminers, as well as for the entire oppressor nation working class, is the fight for international solidarity and against white supremacy. This struggle was not taken on in the recent coalminer strike. Rick Stetler, vice-president of a UMW local in Ohio, was quoted as saying, "He [Carter] better start worrying about the war he is going to have in the coalfields instead of in Africa." But the question that must be asked by conscious anti-imperialists is—would a war in US coalfields be in solidarity with the wars of national liberation in Southern Africa? Will the coalminers take stands in solidarity with the battle against colonial violence that Black people are fighting in Louisville, Kentucky, and with the strikes and armed actions taking place all across Puerto Rico?

At this point, these issues have a very decisive and significant meaning, particularly for the Native American struggle for sovereignty and self-determination. Carter's new energy plan, which is specifically designed to shift from current energy sources towards future days when coal and nuclear power will be major energy resources, means that the US

government, in the name of "conservation" and developing new energy sources, will be stripmining coal on *sovereign* Native lands. To assist in the acquisition of land and coal, the newly-formed Department of Energy will have the full use of the Armed Forces. This is an issue which relates in a very direct way to the struggles taking place on the coalfields, yet it is not being raised.

In the history of the US, gains for labor have overwhelmingly been won for the oppressor nation working class on the backs of oppressed nations within the US and around the world. In this period of crisis, imperialism has continued to try and shift the main burden of the crisis onto the oppressed nations, while attempting to preserve the material bribes which tie the white working class to the US system. It is clear that in order for the coalminers to make a break with this history at a critical juncture, development of solidarity with oppressed nations leading the struggle against the common enemy—US imperialism—is essential.

The responsibility for making this decisive stand for proletarian international solidarity does not rest solely with the coalminers. Most of the white left moved very quickly to declare the coalminers a "vanguard force" within the working class, and to decide that the mineworkers' struggle had "given rise to one of the highest levels of working class unity seen . . . in years." The pronouncements are both premature and wrong; but even, worse, those who made such hasty judgments failed to raise critical struggles which went beyond the immediate day-to-day issues involved in the demands of the coalminers' strike. As a result, spontaneous actions were glorified and substituted for the conscious anti-imperialist politics and actions that revolutionaries have the responsibility to lead around.

It is no accident that support for the mineworkers' immediate struggle and their militancy has come so easy to many white leftists. The oppressor nation left, looking at the world through the pale-colored glasses of white supremacy, has historically denounced the armed actions of national liberation forces inside the US, or has given them only the most minimal support. Day-to-day struggles for survival waged by colonized peoples against national oppression are labeled as "struggles for democratic rights," while on the other hand the coalminers' strike is called a "vanguard struggle." When we dig into the differences in

these definitions, it can be seen that the "vanguard" title bestowed on the coalminers and the liquidation of national liberation struggles of colonized and sovereign peoples within the US has its roots in the white left's failure to fight determinedly among ourselves for international solidarity; let alone within the white working class.

The wrongness of these definitions also springs from a male supremacist liquidation of the struggle for women's liberation. Here again, a comparison can show us a lot. IWY is called a bourgeois feminist event, even though thousands of women took progressive stands against sterilization, for abortion and in solidarity with the struggles of Third World women; and the coalminers are exalted for defying the Taft-Hartley Act. Why the difference? The IWY Conference was seen as a struggle about "women's issues"; the coalminers' strike was defined as a struggle at the point of production (a "real" class struggle). Women's struggles are mainly seen as outside the revolution by the white, male-dominated left, which is not an accident. Imperialism has always tried to wipe out the importance of women's role by keeping women out of power, out of the labor force, out of the history books, in the home—invisible. When the white left develops politics which accept these imperialist definitions of women's role and function, the structures of male supremacy are bolstered and the struggle to defeat imperialism is retarded.

These wrong political views have a basis in the enemy's politics and structures of colonialism, imperialism and white and male supremacy. We in the white left must break with this ideology and the oppressor nation ruling class in a decisive way by fighting for international solidarity and women's liberation, and against colonialism and the entire imperialist system. If we don't it will be impossible for the left to develop politics and organization that will have the capacity to give true revolutionary leadership to struggles like the coalminers' strike.

HEIGHTENING CONTRADICTIONS FOR PFOC

The heightening contradictions of imperialism have impacted on us in PFOC in many ways. Last summer, we began to actively expand our struggle for anti-imperialist politics

and practice recognizing the significance of the mass movements which were being generated in response to imperialism's offensive against national liberation and women's liberation. We moved to develop a strategy and practice which could apply our general political line to the changing conditions in the world. Based on our political analysis of white working class women's leading role within the oppressor nation working class and the level of attack being launched against women, we defined work for IWY as a strategic priority.

With the leadership of national liberation forces, we were also able to extend our work in building international solidarity. We developed work in solidarity with the prison struggles being led by revolutionary prisoners at San Quentin. We played an important role in building the Dessie Woods Support Coalition in the Bay Area with the leadership of the National Committee to Defend Dessie Woods. We pushed forward work in solidarity with Puerto Rico and Southern Africa. This period represented a new stage in our struggle for anti-imperialist politics in the world and the development of our relationships with national liberation forces.

The State's response to these developments was to spring a long-planned plot to attack anti-imperialist politics and PFOC as an organization. (See "Free the LA Five" article.)

At the IWY Convention the State arrested Clayton Van Lydegraf, a member of the Prairie Fire Organizing Committee; Judith Bissell and Leslie Mullin, two revolutionary women, on charges of conspiracy and possession of explosives. At the same time, Marc Perry and Michael Justesen were arrested on the same charges in Los Angeles. The sensationalistic, distorted press coverage which accompanied the arrests was an effort to isolate PFOC at the Houston Convention as part of the international "terrorist" conspiracy and divert attention from the real terrorist forces like the KKK, who were at the Convention.

The real conspiracy at issue is the State's attack on revolutionary anti-imperialist politics, its efforts to suppress movement towards international solidarity and women's liberation within the oppressor nation at a very critical time.

The past few months since these arrests have pushed us in PFOC hard to take up our commitment to anti-imperialist politics on a new level. As white people, we have been

forced to understand more directly the stakes involved in being committed to revolutionary anti-imperialism. The arrests have made us more conscious of the weight of our responsibility to national liberation movements and anti-imperialist movement in general.

PFOC SELF-CRITICISM

For the State to have five anti-imperialists in their hands at this time is a defeat for the movement. In order to turn this defeat around and use it to strengthen revolutionary movement, which we believe is possible, we must carefully examine our organization's internal errors and vulnerabilities which contributed to this situation. Comrades have struggled with us to understand this as a responsibility to oppressed nation forces as well as to the oppressor nation movement. World revolutionary experience and thinking pushes us to undertake self-criticism at this crucial point in our history.

"In battle one army is victorious and the other is defeated; both the victory and the defeat are determined by internal causes. The one is victorious either because it is strong or because of its competent generalship; the other is vanquished either because it is weak or because of its incompetent generalship; it is through internal causes that external causes become operative." Mao, *On Contradiction*

In beginning to examine our history and practice, we believe that our fundamental anti-imperialist politics as expressed in past issues of **Breakthrough** have been correct. However, in trying to apply our anti-imperialist politics in practice, we have been limited in many ways by the material and ideological structures of white supremacy and male supremacy. We have not taken the pulls of white supremacy among us seriously enough. We have exceptionalized ourselves from the fight against opportunism and this has led to serious white supremacist errors.

As members of the oppressor nation, we have the responsibility to develop strategy for organizing the oppressor nation working class on the basis of international solidarity. But in order to organize genuine solidarity, our strategies must be supportive of the leading strategies of national liberation movements. At various points, we have developed our work in

the solidarity movement outside of an understanding of and support for the strategies of national liberation. This puts the needs of white people in the center of the world, undercutting national liberation in the name of solidarity. Unless we are continually waging a conscious battle against this pattern of putting our needs first, white supremacist definitions win out among us.

An underestimation of the State's active opposition to anti-imperialist movement has also been an expression of our white supremacy. White privilege has buffered us from a full understanding of the US imperialist State and how it moves against its enemies. White people in this country, including white leftists, are not thrown into the same kind of direct confrontation with the State on a daily basis as oppressed nation peoples face from the time they are born. We don't see white comrades shot down in the streets by pigs, relatives hauled off to prison or members of our organization framed and murdered as do Black, Puerto Rican, Native American, Latino and Asian peoples. The State's impact on us is mediated by the privileges we get from white supremacy. This distorts our understanding of the power of the State and its determination to crush all movement towards revolution. White supremacy also means that we don't take ourselves seriously as revolutionaries and are surprised when the State does.

We can only take measures to defend our organization against the State insofar as we grasp that we are enemies of imperialism and that it will use its instruments of repression and violence to suppress us. The fact that an FBI pig was able to remain part of our organization for two years and even live with a leader in the organization (Clayton Van Lydegraf) is an expression of our opportunist understanding of the State's mode of operating.

This pig, Richard Gianotti, alias Phil Gamache, got by in PFOC despite his passivity and lack of clear struggle for anti-imperialist politics, because we did not take the threat of State infiltration seriously enough. Consequently we did not take on and resolve the doubts and questions which many people did have about this pig. This pig was able to get by because we did not demand real demonstrations of commitment to anti-imperialist politics but allowed surface support to pass. He was able to get by because he sided with anti-imperialist line and leadership throughout the

history of two-line struggle within PFOC, even though he didn't actively struggle for that line. He was able to get by because he hid behind mechanistic support for women's leadership. His passivity as a man was not exposed as a form of white and male supremacy.

The State and its agents are smart but they are not infallible. They use our weaknesses in order to smash us. Our defense must be the strengthening of anti-imperialist politics and commitment within our organization and movement. Only by taking on the struggle against white and male supremacy more decisively can we build a movement which can withstand State attack. Only by developing a consistent consciousness of the State's strategy and responding with a defense based on correct politics can we guard against future defeats.

There are other areas of work in which our struggle against opportunism has not been strong enough. Our work around the International Women's Year Convention was overall a major step forward in organizing for women's liberation based on an anti-imperialist line. However, we made errors in that work because we underestimated the anti-imperialist potential of women's movement at this time. This error was rooted in male supremacy. We also narrowed our struggle against white supremacy and male supremacy by focusing on the right-wing without really drawing out the relationship between the right-wing and the oppressor nation working class as a whole. (See IWY article for more detailed explanation.) These weaknesses do not negate the strong work we did for IWY, but it is clear that inside PFOC we must fight at every turn in order to maintain a revolutionary politics.

White and male supremacy have also had an impact on the development of revolutionary leadership within PFOC. Historically, white and male supremacist approaches have prevented the white left from being able to apply the principles of democratic centralism in a revolutionary way. Although significant breakthroughs in struggling against dogmatic applications of democratic centralism and in developing women's leadership have been made, bourgeois and male supremacist definitions which focus on individual, exceptional leaders at the expense of collectivity and continual political struggle have weakened our efforts to build revolutionary organization and practice as an organization. Women's leadership must be based on firm solidarity among

women. Tendencies to build individual women leaders instead of building collective women's leadership are tokenism which divided women instead of challenging male supremacist suppression of women. We believe that women's leadership is absolutely necessary for the correct development of anti-imperialist politics in the oppressor nation. Understanding our past weaknesses has enabled us to strengthen our leadership and consequently our entire organization at this critical period in our history.

We take full responsibility for our errors and weaknesses and want to be accountable to national liberation and anti-imperialist movements for change. Analyzing these weaknesses and learning from them is not only important for PFOC but for the left as a whole because these errors are not unique to us as an organization. Revolutionary movement is still in its beginning stages in the oppressor nation precisely because of the grip which white supremacy, male supremacy and opportunism have on the white left and the white working class. PFOC has made an important contribution to revolution because we have waged a fight against opportunism in the left, but to continue playing a role in this struggle, we must be honest about our own opportunism and demonstrate our commitment to struggle against these errors.

BUILDING THE FIGHT AGAINST OPPORTUNISM

On this basis we can strengthen our political struggle with opportunist lines on the left. As the contradictions of imperialism heighten, the dangerous counter-revolutionary impact of opportunist lines increases. We can see this most clearly in the *Guardian's* opportunist politics in the past few months: its centrist position on the Palestinian struggle, its failure to link national liberation in Southern Africa to Black liberation within current US borders, its condescending, male supremacist approach to the IWY Convention, its proclamation of the coalminers as the vanguard of proletarian struggle at this time and its dangerous campaign against "terrorism." At a time when imperialist states around the world have joined forces to condemn and wipe out armed struggle under the phony cover of fighting terrorism, the *Guardian's* active condemnation of terrorism collaborates with the State and helps set up specific organizations for State attack.

The fact that the *Guardian* waited months before mentioning the arrests of the five anti-imperialists in Los Angeles while the bourgeois press has been running false, sensationalistic stories for weeks, is one more expression of its rotten politics and its opportunist approach to news coverage. Like the *New York Times*, it prints what it sees fit to print.

Within the oppressor nation the struggle for a revolutionary line on armed struggle is one of the most difficult and one of the most necessary struggles to undertake. Responding to the State's campaign against terrorism with denunciations of terrorism, as the majority of the white left has done, only helps the State wage genocide against oppressed nations and prevents the development of real anti-imperialist consciousness. Armed struggle is not a deferred question for oppressed peoples struggling around the world and it must not be a deferred question for white revolutionaries if international solidarity means anything. To build anti-imperialist consciousness in the movement we must struggle for an understanding of white revolutionaries' responsibility to fight in solidarity with the strategies of national liberation movements. We have the responsibility to thoroughly examine and analyze the history of armed struggle in the oppressor nation, especially the history of the past twenty years in order to root out historic weaknesses based in white and male supremacy and lay the political basis for building a winning strategy.

MOVING FORWARD

This is a critical period to be building anti-imperialist movement in the oppressor nation. The State would like nothing better than to have PFOC turn our organization into a defense committee, to keep us tied up between courts and lawyers so that we're doing nothing else. They have tried to harass other leaders of PFOC since the arrests through FBI surveillance and we expect that they will continue these attempts to keep us from the work of building anti-imperialist movement at this time. We are determined not to let this happen. We are committed to free the five people in jail and place their case in the context of advancing anti-imperialist politics. But our fundamental political commitment, and theirs, is to national liberation, women's liberation and anti-imperialist class struggle overall. Since the

arrests we have been able to actually strengthen our practice on this political basis. We will struggle to remain on this course.

THE ROLE OF BREAKTHROUGH

This issue of **Breakthrough** marks a year of publication of our political journal. We undertook the publication of a political journal because we believed that the struggle for anti-imperialist political line is critical for party building and the uniting of an anti-imperialist core within the oppressor nation. In order to fight the imperialist system, people must have a common understanding of how that system functions. In order to build strong anti-imperialist movement we must collectively understand the historic and present obstacles to revolution in white supremacy, male supremacy and opportunism within the white left. Only a common understanding of the world and the movement expressed through a revolutionary line can unite people in political practice and organization.

The need for revolutionary line and strategy grows greater as the contradictions of the imperialist system increase and new potential for anti-imperialist movement is opened up.

Over the past year, **Breakthrough** has played a significant role in the development of revolutionary line in the oppressor nation left.

It has helped to put out the writings of revolutionaries of oppressed nations to support their political leadership. It has tried to apply general anti-imperialist line to both the world situation and to work within the movement.

We want to strengthen **Breakthrough's** role in all these areas in the next year. This issue of **Breakthrough** tries to deal with some of the key political developments and events which have occurred in the past few months. We have tried to draw out the relationship between the political lines and analyses put forth and their implications for building practice in the world.

In the coming year, we want to make the publication of **Breakthrough** be on a regular basis. We want to increase our distribution. We want to exchange and encourage more discussion and struggle with the readers of **Breakthrough**. We urge people to respond to the contents of **Breakthrough**.

A Luta Continua
National Collective
PFOC

PALESTINE

ISRAEL REFUSES TO EASE POLICY ON SETTLEMENTS . . . 30 DIE IN BLOODY P.L.O. RAID . . . ISRAEL STRIKES INTO LEBANON . . . ISRAELIS ROUT P.L.O., HOLD A PART OF LEBANON

In the last several months, the Middle East has become more and more a major focus of world attention. Up until the armed action of Palestinian guerrilla fighters against Israel in March, the bourgeois media has been highlighting the so-called "peace talks"—the treacherous maneuvers between Sadat, Begin and Carter which have been depicted as the promising solution to the Middle East "problem". The courageous armed attack launched by the PLO on March 11 has changed the terms of the situation, forcing even the bourgeois press to reflect what's really at issue in the Middle East—the national liberation war of the Palestinian people for self-determination and their homeland versus the imperialist, hegemonic strategies of Israel backed by US imperialism. The Palestinian offensive and the subsequent full-scale Israeli invasion of Lebanon has disrupted the current US strategy of neo-colonialism. It is difficult to talk about "peace" when Israeli troops are taking over Lebanon and committing genocide against Palestinians in the process.

Significantly, the Palestinian action came just at the end of the UN debate on the neo-colonialist "internal settlement" in Rhodesia which resulted in a denunciation

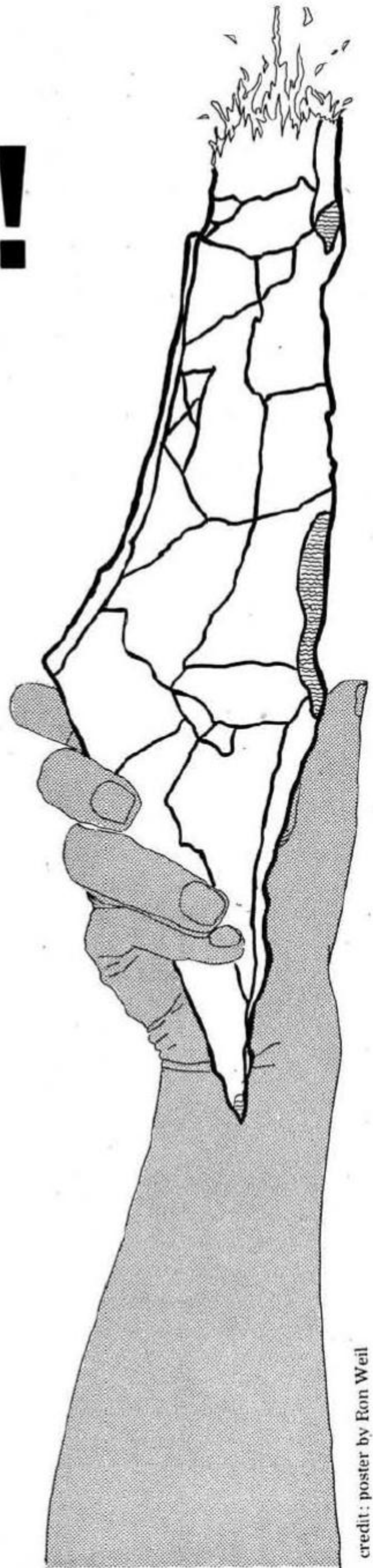
of the settlement. Just as the leadership of the Patriotic Front of Zimbabwe has opposed the treachery of the neo-colonialist negotiations with the necessity of people's war, the PLO has exposed the phoniness of the Middle East negotiations which exclude Palestinian participation, by intensifying armed struggle. Carter's strategy of neo-colonialism around the world can only be met by building national liberation struggles.

In this changed situation the careful efforts of the Carter administration to obscure the central contradictions in the Middle East between US imperialism and national liberation are falling apart. The "historic peace talks" were nothing more than elaborate cover-up efforts to mask the struggle being waged by the Palestinians for their rightful control over the land, resources and destinies of their people versus the continuance of Israeli settler colonialism or neocolonial rule, either of which would function to maintain the control and domination of US imperialism in the Middle East. Recent US moves show that it is determined to hold on to its power over the area by any means necessary. If it means that a more secure and palatable control can be obtained by diminishing its straightforward support of Israel, the US is willing to go for it. Carter backs arms sales to Egypt and other Arab nations. He supports Egypt's opposition to Israeli settlements in occupied lands. He outlines US support for some kind of Palestinian "homeland". He allies with some Arab leaders against the national aspirations of the masses of Arab peoples.

WILL WIN !

The real purpose of all these maneuvers in the Middle East as in Southern Africa is to develop neo-colonial solutions which can maintain imperialist domination in the face of the rising challenge which national liberation poses to US hegemony. The bourgeois media tries to hide this purpose by focusing on secondary contradictions such as those between Israel and the US or among the Arab governments. As the PLO has shown, the only genuine solution to the Middle East crisis is self-determination for Palestinian people and the creation of a democratic secular state of Palestine.

Within the US white left, the response to both Carter's neo-colonial maneuvers and the murderous Israeli invasion of Lebanon has been practically non-existent. This continues a history which has basically betrayed the Palestinian struggle. In PFOC we are very self-critical that we have not taken up the responsibility of members of the US oppressor nation to help build a movement in solidarity with Palestine. Our errors are connected to the errors of the white left in general in regards to Palestine. Lack of solidarity with Palestine is an expression of overall white supremacist politics which liquidate the central importance of international solidarity. However, the lack of support for Palestine has particular roots in the hold which Zionist ideology has on the left in this country. Zionism poses as a solution to anti-Semitism and the intense oppression which Jewish people have been subject to, especially in the past forty years. But fundamentally Zionism is a version of white



credit: poster by Ron Weil

supremacy which offers power and privilege to Jews through the power of an Israeli settler-state built on the backs of the nations indigenous to the region, in particular the Palestinians. Israel is a settler colony just like Rhodesia and South Africa. The "security" which Jews are offered in Israel is based on robbery and genocide. It is imperialism's solution to the murder of millions of Jews during the '30's and '40's. Instead of taking on the struggle against anti-Semitism and the social system which created it, Zionism allies with imperialism. Anti-Semitism is certainly not a figment of Jewish imagination, but Zionism is a false solution to this contradiction. Historically Zionists have even allied with outright anti-Semitism in Russia, in Germany and today in South Africa when it can serve their material interests. The only real solution to anti-Semitism and the oppression of Jews lies in international proletarian revolution. In order for a strong solidarity movement with Palestine to be built in the US, these contradictions need to be exposed, not ignored as is so often the case.

This article is a beginning attempt on our part to take up our responsibility to the Palestinian struggle, to rectify some of our weaknesses in this area. There are many serious gaps in our analysis at this point, particularly in regards to the role of the Soviet Union in the Middle East. However, we hope the article will push political struggle forward and help lay a basis for building anti-imperialist movement in solidarity with Palestine.

IMPERIALISM AND SETTLER COLONIALISM IN PALESTINE

The history of imperialism in the Middle East goes back to the end of the 1800's when British policy makers began to formulate strategic goals for wielding power in the Middle East. The Middle East is strategically located at the crossroads of North Africa, Asia and Europe. The construction of the Suez Canal heightened its value and as well the importance which imperialist power placed on maintaining secure control. Finally, imperialist need for

oil around the time of World War I coincided with the discovery that the Middle East also contained a vast proportion of the world's known oil reserves. This consolidated the need for imperialist control.

British imperial interests took shape in the context of national and social revolution ushered in by the full blown development of the era of imperialism. Middle East oil assumed greater strategic importance with the success of the Bolshevik Revolution, which removed Russian oil fields from direct imperialist control. At the same time, Arab nationalists, including Palestinians, were rising up in revolt, demanding independence from the Ottoman Turkish empire. The British moved in by claiming to support Arab rights against the Turks.

The interests of British imperialism were realized after World War I, when the British gained control, from Turkey, over Syria, Lebanon and Palestine to administer as "mandates" under the League of Nations. The mandate system was an early attempt at sanitizing and legalizing neo-colonialism through a supposed commitment to the future exercise of self-determination. The British betrayed their wartime promises of independence to the rulers of the Arab states and the people of Palestine and set up Palestine as a British mandate to which Jewish immigration, which had been occurring since the 1880's, was actively encouraged.

Some Jewish people had continued to live in the Middle East, including Palestine, for many centuries. But the turn of the century and the period before and after World War I saw the development of the Zionist movement and ideology modeled after other settler colonialist strategies, calling for the massive resettlement of European Jews in Palestine. With British backing, upper class Jews proposed to build a Jewish colony through the purchase of Arab lands and the displacement of Arab peoples. This was their solution to anti-Semitism—a solution which served their interests and the interests of imperialist powers. Zionists emphasized how this Jewish settler colony could serve British interests. In 1938 Bri-



Palestinian women and men took up arms against Zionist settlers and the British mandate government, in a 1936 mass uprising which tied down one-third of the British army.

tish Zionist Lord Melcher summarized these clear reasons for continued British support of Jewish colonization of Palestine:

"The advantages to the British Empire are obvious. The Suez Canal and air stations, the oil-pipe outlet in Haifa and its harbor, have become vital to our naval strategy in the Mediterranean. The security of the imperial complex of interests can be better assured by a large European population than by the few battalions that can be spared."

The devastating effect on the Palestinian nation of land purchases, theft and Palestinian exclusion from the growing Zionist economy, was met by active resistance, culminating in the armed uprising of 1936. The Palestinians staged a six-month general strike against Zionist immigration and its backing by British imperialism, then moved to armed struggle based in the villages. This struggle engulfed the country and tied down a third of the British empire's army! This uprising was betrayed by the Arab ruling classes rather than defeated militarily. This betrayal marked a historic turning point for the Palestinian struggle, making clear that liberation for the nation of Palestine would not be led by the ruling classes of the Arab states, but would have to be based in the masses of op-

pressed workers and peasants. The history of the Palestinian resistance for the forty years since the defeat of 1936 has been a history of the development of forms of mass struggle that support and are led by the armed resistance of Palestinian revolutionaries.

The threat to British control posed by the 1936-39 rebellion, combined with the approaching world war, led to a shift in British policy in Palestine. To secure British oil interests, they sought as many regional allies as possible, and therefore qualified their support for Zionism. The Zionist response was not to fight the British by joining the anti-imperialist struggle of the Palestinian workers and peasants, but instead to shift their allegiance to rising US imperialism.

FOUNDING THE STATE OF ISRAEL

Just as Britain had expanded its empire through World War I, the US emerged from World War II as the dominant imperialist power in the world, stepping in to bring various regions under its own control from the weakened French and British empires and to defend imperialism from the rising tide of national liberation struggles. The US, having done little for European Jews dur-

ing World War II, proposed that the UN, which it dominated, establish a Jewish state on part of the territory of the former British mandate, disregarding the wishes and interests of the indigenous Palestinian people. In the wake of the genocidal program of Nazi Germany which had been focused on Jewish people, support for a Jewish state was rapidly built among masses of Jews. In this way, imperialism was able to use the issue of Jewish oppression to further its own interests. In 1948, the Zionists proclaimed their "independence," and in the ensuing war with the Palestinians produced a militarily-defined Jewish state throughout most of the British-mandate Palestine area, except for the Gaza and West Bank areas. The governments of the surrounding Arab countries gave lip service to the Palestinian cause but actually sold them out for a chunk of what was left of Palestine—Jordan annexed the West Bank and Egypt took over the Gaza strip. Prior to and following the establishment of the state of Israel, the Zionists carried out a concerted campaign of terror and expropriation which drove hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from their homes and lands, into exile and refugee camps in Gaza, the West Bank, Jordan, and other Arab nations. Dispossessed Palestinians have provided the leadership of the Palestinian resistance. This violent upheaval and destruction of traditional Palestinian society has placed a whole people in danger of outright extermination as a people; but it has also given birth to a mass movement of resistance, not only to Israel, but to US imperialism and to the reactionary Arab states who have done its bidding. Lessons from the betrayal of the 1936-39 rebellion and Arab response to the establishment of Israel taught many Palestinians that the corrupt Arab ruling classes were clients of imperialism and not genuine Arab nationalists.

ARAB RESISTANCE IN THE 1950's

The 1948 war transformed not only the military but also the political and social map of the region. The bankruptcy and in-

ability of the existing Arab regimes to defend the national and popular interests of the Arab people and nations were exposed. A number of nationalist movements and currents arose among the Arab peoples and came to power in the 1950's and 60's. The nationalist movements were a growing threat to the consolidation of US interests and to the Arab client states serving those interests. The most progressive of these movements were stimulated by the cause of the Palestinians and their just struggle with the expansionist settler colony of Israel. The Arab Nationalist Movement (ANM) was led by Palestinians. These revolutionaries analyzed earlier defeats and saw that social change in the Arab countries was necessary to the success of the Palestinian revolution. They saw their interests betrayed by elite classes in power within the various Arab countries—elites whose interests were tied to oil profits from imperialism, like Saudi Arabia, or whose regimes depended on CIA funding, like that of Hussein in Jordan, to maintain oppressive societies. The Palestinian movement under revolutionary leadership stirred the masses of people in the Arab countries to see the oppression and collaboration with imperialism of their own governments. This awakened anti-imperialist sentiment in a whole region vital to imperialism.

"It is natural that the reactionary Arab regimes took such a defeatist attitude towards the judaizing of Palestine because, as a result of their feudal-bourgeois set-up, they could not confront the plans of imperialism and Zionism with the force of arms and popular national revolutions. Reactionary regimes, at all times and places—and this applied to the Arab states—fear the masses more than they fear imperialism." From a document of the Democratic Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, 1968.

The social and political ferment caused by the contradiction of the Arab people with imperialism was also reflected in other currents and movements of Arab nationalism. The Arab Socialist Ba'athist parties, which eventually came to power in Syria and Iraq, were an attempt to deal with this contradic-

tion. The leading figure of Arab nationalism of the 1950's and 1960's, however, was Nasser of Egypt.

Nasser came to power in Egypt at the head of a republican movement of young military officers, deposing the corrupt, British dominated feudal monarchical system. His policies, such as nationalization of the Suez Canal and the development of an extensive state capitalist sector galvanized nationalist sentiment in the area and promoted the development of Nasserist parties in other Arab countries. Nasser did not stand for a thorough-going social revolution, and although he did back some republican and revolutionary movements in the Middle East, such as in Yemen, the main thrust of Egypt's approach to Arab unity was to place Egypt at the head of the Arab bloc while avoiding protracted confrontations with Israel. However when Nasser seized the Suez Canal in 1956 from its imperialist overlords, the Arab masses correctly saw the significance of this act in the struggle against Western imperialist domination. Israel responded quickly, eager to prove itself as "watchdog for the West," and joined Britain and France in invading Egypt to try to regain control over the Canal.

Although they contained many contradictions, Palestinian and Arab nationalist movements posed a serious threat to imperialism in the Middle East. As early as 1951, Israel outlined its relationship to these developments. An Israeli newspaper editor wrote:

"The West is none too happy about its relations with the Arab states in the Middle East. The feudal regimes there have to make such concessions to the nationalist movements, which sometimes have a pronounced socialist-leftist coloring, that they become more and more reluctant to supply Britain and the United States with their natural resources and military bases Therefore strengthening Israel helps the Western powers to maintain equilibrium and stability in the Middle East. Israel is to become the watchdog. There is no fear that Israel will undertake any aggressive policy towards the Arab states when this would explicitly contradict the wishes of the US

and Britain. But if for any reason the Western powers should sometimes prefer to close their eyes, Israel could be relied upon to punish one or several neighboring states where discourtesy towards the West went beyond the bounds of the permissible."

ISRAELI EXPANSIONISM VS. PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE

It was this conception on which Israel operated in invading Egypt during the 1956 war, alongside England and France, in response to the nationalization of the Suez Canal. While this action was clearly in the interests of imperialist control, it did not suit the aims of the US at the time. Instead US imperialism called for Israeli-European withdrawal from Egypt. In this they posed as protectors of Arab sovereignty and hoped to replace Britain as the main power in the region.

In fact, the 1956 war actually represented the consolidation of US hegemony in the region over the earlier British and French influence. The Palestinians continued to be treated as "refugees," a problem for the United Nations relief agencies, held in camps in areas controlled by Jordan, Egypt, and elsewhere. The process of expropriation and exploitation of Palestinian land and resources within Israel's borders continued. Tension in the region remained high, and the Palestinians themselves, especially after 1960, began to develop their own forms of national organization, and to develop political-military groupings to carry out the struggle against the Zionist state. The lessons of Viet Nam, Algeria, Cuba and the Congo were drawn on. Al Fatah was founded in 1958. A Marxist-Leninist organization of Palestinians emerged from ANM, later to form the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and the Democratic Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DPFLP). Guerrilla groups based in the Palestinian camps where new generations were growing up became active. The Soviet Union came to play a more active role in the region, colluding and contending with US imperial interests and providing arms to various Arab regimes and



credit: Our Roots Are Still Alive

The Israeli settler State, first armed by British and now US imperialism, continues to wage an expansionist war of genocide against the colonized Palestinians.

forces. But the fundamental factor was the escalating armed struggle of the Palestinian guerrillas against Israel. The Israelis retaliated against Syria and against Palestinian villages for these attacks.

Finally, in June 1967, Israel launched a lightning war against the Arabs on three fronts, catching the massed Egyptian forces actually unprepared, and seizing the Sinai peninsula, the West Bank and the Golan Heights area of Syria.

After the 1967 war the Palestinian resistance saw even more clearly the need to rely mainly on its own resources and strengths and to control its own struggle, now with a growing base of mass support from the so-called refugee camps where the dispossessed Palestinians lived, from the large Palestinian communities in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, and from Palestinians inside the newly occupied territories of the West Bank of the Jordan River and the

Gaza Strip. The guerrilla forces, particularly Fatah, came into control of the PLO as a united front for the Palestine resistance and a form of government in exile.

PALESTINIAN ARMED STRUGGLE

After the 1967 war, the Palestinians escalated their armed struggle on many fronts. Attacks on Israeli settlements and the armed seizure of airplanes by groups of Arab revolutionaries have been loudly denounced as "terrorism" not only by the imperialist media but by the opportunist left as well. These armed actions are components of a strategy for revolutionary struggle against a settler enemy from an insecure rear position in countries neighboring Israel and in a situation of relative isolation.

Far from being the work of isolated "fanatics," actions taken by revolutionary

Palestinian organizations are a serious contribution to revolutionary struggle based on the nationalist aspirations of the masses of Palestinian people. In the words of Leila Khaled:

"We do not embark haphazardly on adventurous and romantic individualistic projects to fulfill 'individual needs' or 'act out frustrations and hostilities' as Western 'scientific' psychologists hypothesize. We act collectively in a planned manner . . . to expose a vital nerve of the enemy and . . . to dramatize our own plight and to express our resolute determination . . . We act with a view to disseminating revolutionary propaganda, sowing terror in the heart of the enemy, mobilizing our masses, making our cause international, rallying the forces of progress on our side, and underscoring our grievances before an unresponsive Zionist-inspired and Zionist-informed Western public opinion We act as revolution-

aries to inspire the masses and trigger off the revolutionary upheaval in an era of counter-revolution."

While the imperialist media uses these armed actions to try to split the Palestinian movement and justify the genocidal terror of the Israelis and the reactionaries in Jordan, Syria and Lebanon against the Palestinians, the mass struggle of the Palestinians grows ever stronger and more unified in support of the liberation of Palestine by any means necessary. Israel and the US attempted to portray the Zionist settler colony as the victim of terrorist attacks, and as a "David" facing the "Goliath" of the Arab regimes. In fact the opposite is true. The Zionist settler colony backed by US imperialism is the main source of genocidal terror and colonial violence in the area. Armed by US imperialism Israel has consistently maintained absolute mili-



Palestinian women's militia in training.

tary and technological superiority throughout the region over the combined forces of all the Arab nations.

The 1967 conquests, while intensifying the exploitation and oppression of the Palestinian people by Zionism and US imperialism, also served to strengthen the Palestinian revolution. Israel began to be increasingly isolated internationally. The Palestinian bases in Jordan and the developing social transformation in the camps threatened to create a situation of dual power in Jordan between the Palestinian revolutionary forces and CIA-backed reactionary King Hussein. With logistical backup from Israel, Hussein's army attacked the Palestinians in Jordan in Black September of 1970, killing hundreds, driving the guerrilla forces from the country and dealing a severe setback to the Palestinian national liberation struggle.

Over the next years, the Palestinians regrouped and reorganized, building up their strength mainly in Lebanon as a base of continued operations against the Zionist settler state and for mobilization of their people.

WOMEN IN THE RESISTANCE AND REVOLUTION

The building of the Palestinian resistance as a mass movement meant mobilizing a revolutionary new Palestinian society. Nowhere is this as clear as in the role played by women in the Palestinian liberation struggle. Leila Khaled, a militant of the PFLP, reflects on the impact of imperialism on the role of Palestinian women when she describes the struggle of her and her sisters to be allowed to join the Arab Nationalist Movement:

"When we were kicked out of Palestine . . . , Zionists did not distinguish between men and women. Women constituted over half the Palestinian people and they too were exiled. The Israelis trained their women to fight and granted them civil liberties. If we wished to defeat the Israelis we must outplay them in their own game. Mother was silenced by one final question: 'Do you want to see Palestine liberated?' . . . Mother, you cannot then oppose the

participation of your daughters in political life, can you ?' "

The destruction of traditional Palestinian society by the national oppression of imperialism and the brutality of Israeli settler colonialism had a particular impact on the role of women. The expropriation of land reduced the Palestinians to destitution, and the forced exile of the Palestinians broke apart many families. This was reinforced by the Israeli conquests of 1967 and a new wave of forced expulsions of Palestinians from this territory, as well as new techniques of colonial violence and terror against Palestinians within Israel's new military borders. The attacks on the exile camps took their toll on women and children as well as men. Women as well as men have been working as superexploited labor in the occupied territories. Women have led in the mass resistance struggle, and been jailed, tortured and deported. Within this women have fought for an understanding within the resistance movement that the liberation of the Palestinian people must be the liberation of the whole people, waged by all the people, and that the oppression of women in traditional Palestinian society plays into the hands of the imperialists by posing the liberation of women as a threat to men. There have been some well-known women like Leila Khaled who have fought within the liberation movements for women to take a full role in all parts of the struggle, but in fact thousands of Palestinian women have led in taking a revolutionary role, in political education in the exile camps, and in the mass movement as well as the armed struggle. In these Palestinian women, the spirit of Dalal Mughrabi, a Palestinian fighter killed in March while leading armed action against Israel, will live on.

IMPERIALIST STRATEGY

The no-war/no-peace situation broke open again in 1973. Anwar Sadat had come to power in Egypt after Nasser's death, and he moved to strengthen his position through a war to reopen the Suez Canal. The US cemented its control as the military guarantor of cease-fire lines in the Sinai peninsula.



credit: Portraits of Palestinian Women in Struggle

After the 1967 war, Palestinian women sparked national resistance actions in Zionist-occupied territories. Here, women demonstrate against an Israeli military parade held in Jerusalem, 1968.

Popular support for the anti-Zionist struggle during this war pushed the Arab regimes to counter the massive US rearmament of Israel by withholding their oil. (These actions and later oil price increases played a role in transforming imperialist financial and industrial policies worldwide, but the real issues, including increased US profits, were obscured by phony US oil industry claims of an "energy crisis." The strengthening of OPEC (the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) had contradictory effects which are beyond the scope of this article to analyze.)

All this pushed the US to begin to develop a single, consistent policy for the Middle East that could both contain the rising forces of national liberation (especially the Palestinians, but also in the Sahara, the Gulf, and the Horn) and consolidate and stabilize its base among reactionary Arab client states while still protecting and defending Israel as an outpost of US imperialism in the region. A major step in this plan was the effort to destroy the Palestinians as a factor once and for all by wiping them out in Lebanon. Israel and the US backed the right-wing Lebanese Christian Falange forces against the Palestine liberation forces and the

progressive Lebanese movement. Israel supplied arms and played a direct military role in Southern Lebanon, effectively annexing and occupying a zone across its northern border. But the left forces were predominant. Only the military intervention of Syria as an "Arab peacekeeping force" in Lebanon succeeded in imposing a shaky cease-fire and settlement, and even that could not eliminate the Palestinian fighting forces, firmly based among their own people and allied with progressive Lebanese.

THE NEO-COLONIAL STRATEGY OF THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION

The failure of the imperialist plot to destroy the Palestinians in Lebanon has led to the current new stage of US maneuvers. While Israeli and reactionary Arab military attacks on the Palestinians continue, the US is trying to weaken the Palestinians and prepare for a neo-colonial solution paying lip service to the principle of self-determination. Just as in Southern Africa, Carter pursues his neo-colonial policy to suppress national liberation behind a facade of moralizing and upholding human rights. This rhetorical attempt to rescue the international image of US imperialism—ex-



credit: Free Palestine

Israeli prison camps, where hundreds of Palestinians are imprisoned, enforce the colonial relationship between Israel and the Palestinian nation.

posed in Viet Nam and Watergate—is a major policy objective of Carter and his backers in the Trilateral Commission. Carter is trying to give US imperialism a face lift. Instead of appearing as the major oppressor and exploiter of nations around the world, the US is pretending in words to support its version of national liberation, trying to obscure its fundamental and irreconcilable contradiction with national liberation, especially the Palestine liberation struggle. Behind this facade, Carter continues to seek Arab forces who, based on their actual neo-colonial relationship to US imperialism, will wed their interests to his and advance US policy. This is the context for Carter's proclamation of support for some sort of Palestinian "homeland" and his backing of Sadat's peace initiative. The US, having been unable to find any Palestinian forces inside or outside the PLO to front for its solution, turned to Sadat, attempting to broker a settlement between its Arab client and its Jewish settler colony outpost. At the same time, it continues its effort to splinter and smash the national liberation forces.

These attempts have taken several forms over the past few years: selective attacks by Lebanese rightists on the PFLP and other Marxist groups in the PLO attempting to split them from the rest of the PLO; infiltration of parts of the PLO such as Saiqa (a Syrian based group) using them to attack other groups; attempts to manufacture political splits; assassination, widespread arrest and torture; and limited "concessions" such as the vague promise of Palestine "self-rule" in an Israeli controlled "Palestinian homeland" reminiscent of the South African bantustans. Another popular imperialist plot is to federate a West Bank Palestinian state to the reactionary and CIA funded monarch, Jordan's Hussein, the butcher of Black September. Carter can win support for these policies from repressive, exploitive Arab regimes threatened by the explosive potential of the Palestinian revolution.

CARTER'S "DIFFERENCES" WITH ISRAEL

The other side of increased US reliance on the repressive and cooptive apparatuses

of neo-colonial Arab regimes is Carter's apparent disassociation from Israeli policy. A *New York Times* article on Feb. 11, 1978 says that the Carter administration "is preparing for another period of sharp exchanges with Israel and even a bitter political clash." The issues at stake are seen as Israel's military settlements in the Sinai Peninsula, which it wants to keep even if it "gives back" the area to Egypt, and what is called "the question of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and the 'intertwined' Palestinian question." When we look at the Carter plan, however, it makes no mention of an independent Palestinian state. So for all the talk of concessions, the reality of the Sadat-Carter-Begin talks has been to try to strengthen the hand of both the Israeli settler state and reactionary Arab governments who will support it. In this way, the US can safeguard its economic, political and strategic interests by playing a low-profile "even-handed" role. Thus US aid to Israel can continue at its current \$2 billion a year level, while the supposed

"differences" between the US and Israel are put out as a smokescreen.

In this way, the US has attempted to regain the initiative from its overall strategic defensive position in the face of the gains of national liberation. This has had some success; first of all, in winning Sadat, it creates a major split among the Arab frontline forces. Sadat is seeking a separate peace between Israel and Egypt; he long ago stopped insisting on PLO representation as the basis for a settlement. This diplomatic maneuvering is put forward in a torrent of imperialist propaganda that seeks to divert international support which has heretofore recognized the sole legitimacy of the PLO to represent the Palestinian people.

A major component of this strategy has been to portray the Palestinians as senseless "terrorists", inhuman monsters, even Nazis, intent on murdering innocent Israeli women and children. The so-called "terrorism" of the Palestinians is then used to justify the most atrocious actions. This has





Khaled Mohammed Ibrahim

Dalal said al-Mughrabi

Hussein Mahmoud Ibrahim Fayyad

Aly Hussein Moura

The March, 1978 PLO raid was used as Israel's pretext for launching, with US approval, a long-planned invasion of southern Lebanon. Dalal said al-Mughrabi led the action, and was killed along with Aly Hussein Moura and others. Their other comrades, Hussein Fayyad and Khaled Ibrahim, were captured by the Israelis.

nowhere been clearer than in Israel's response to the PLO raid in March which involved a military invasion of Lebanon and has forced thousands of Palestinian refugees to flee and has killed or injured many others. In the abortive Egyptian commando raid on Cyprus, Sadat joined the "anti-terrorist", anti-Palestinian ranks, following the footsteps of Israel at Entebbe and Germany at Mogadishu. Egypt's role in Cyprus has helped mobilize anti-Palestinian sentiment among the Egyptian people.

Overall, the PLO has united in the face of all these attacks and firmly rejected all imperialist schemes. While some conservative forces have been drawn to settle for the imperialist deal the Palestinians in the main have rejected the US strategy. Similarly, most of the other Arab states have been won to a common critique of the Egyptian role and the US plan, and to supporting a "rejectionist" summit. Yasir Arafat, head of the PLO, states the unity and determination of the Palestinian people in a recent interview with the *Manchester Guardian* of England:

"... The Palestinian revolution is the most important factor in the Middle East equation.

"It does not represent only its own and the Palestinians' will, but that of the Arab

masses from the Atlantic to the Gulf. It is a world wide factor, recognized by 105 states, more than recognize Israel. They are trying to set up alternatives (to the PLO), but even those who came from the West Bank and Gaza to see President Sadat said that they accept the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinian people."

In response to a question about policy differences between the US and Israel) . . . "I don't think there is any difference between American and Zionist interest. They are indivisible. Israel is an advanced outpost of American imperialism."

The overall effect of the new imperialist plan has been to push the political line struggle in the Palestinian movement and throughout revolutionary movements in the Arab world to the left. In order to deal with neo-colonial plans to liquidate their struggle, the Palestinian movement has strengthened its reliance on armed struggle and people's war and stepped up its campaign against traitors to its cause. In the progressive movement in countries like Lebanon, the issue of armed struggle has been pushed to a new importance. This process has served to expose the opportunist and revisionist lines led by the Soviet Union, which counsels peaceful solutions, and has historically based its policy in the

region throughout this period on pushing its own hegemonic interests.

The US/Sadat/Begin peace talks have inevitably had damaging impact on the Palestinian struggle, diverting world attention from the real issues and undermining clearcut support for Palestine. However, they have not been able to register any substantial victories or to achieve a settlement. The contradictions which do exist between US and Israeli strategy have made the negotiating process even more uncertain. The US plan has as one of its key goals guaranteeing the security of the Zionist settler colonial state with which US imperial interests are still fundamentally bound up. However, the intransigence of Israel's expansionist policies have been a stumbling block to the more sophisticated neo-colonial approach of the US.

To a degree, the US interests are served by exaggerating and highlighting its tactical differences with Israel as a way to gain greater credibility for its initiatives. In this context, the parallels are clear between US policy in Southern Africa and in the Middle East, as well as the commonality between Israel and South Africa as white settler colonies. US imperialism continues to be the main prop for these regimes because their continued existence as white supremacist states are in the fundamental strategic interests of US imperialism and its ability to control the politics, labor and resources of the African continent.

ISRAEL, TOOL OF U.S. IMPERIAL STRATEGY IN AFRICA

The role of Israel in pushing US interests in Africa and in developing an axis with South Africa expose this basic commonality of interests.

Along with its military role for imperialism in the Middle East, Israel was used in the 1960's to penetrate new African countries for US interests. African trade union leaders were trained in Israel by the Israeli State trade union, the Histadrut, under programs funded by the AFL-CIO and integrated into the CIA's international labor strategy. Thirteen African countries were "beneficiaries" of Israeli agricultural expertise; the Israelis advised in the setting

up of pseudo-socialist farm projects like the Israeli kibbutzim; and as in Israel, these projects were organized along paramilitary lines, serving to help coopt and control the rural people. Israeli military forces have been directly involved in Ethiopia, where they maintain three bases, and in Zaire, where Israeli troops were involved in action in the Congo in 1960. Most African countries broke their ties with Israel after the 1967 war exposed the barbarity of Israeli colonialism.

In this situation of increased isolation, Israel and South Africa have strengthened their long standing historic ties and drawn closer together. There are many components to this cooperation. Trade between Israel and South Africa has increased rapidly. Diamond trade between South African mines and the Israeli diamond finishing industry, since the 1930's has been a major part of the foreign exchange of both countries. South African investment in Israel and Israeli investment in South Africa are increasing as well. Many Israeli industries finish products originating in South Africa and then re-export them to Black Africa where a "Made in Israel" label can sell, while South African products are banned.

Military cooperation between Israel and South Africa is rapidly becoming the most significant aspect of their relationship. South Africa has become the largest client for Israel's burgeoning arms industry. The most recent developments are the use of Israeli troops in helicopter attacks on SWAPO in Namibia, training South African troops in desert warfare in Namibia, and in bombing raids on Mozambique and the Zimbabwe Patriotic Front transit and refugee camps. In these ways, Israel and South Africa have developed mutually beneficial relationships that allow their continued existence.

Behind the support Israel and South Africa provide for each other lies US support for them both. Both Israel and South Africa rely on US economic, military and political support to carry out the US's dirty work. Their attacks on national liberation, their attempts to wipe out the armed struggles or severely cripple them, serve the most

fundamental aims of the Carter administration. On the one hand, they provide an overtly racist backdrop from which Carter can stand out as a pure "born again" Christian. On the other hand, these attacks make liberation movements and oppressed nations generally more vulnerable to imposed neo-colonial solutions.

US support for this role by the settler states is most effective if it is hidden. This is facilitated by the growing support which Israel and South Africa can provide for each other in a situation in which settler colonies are increasingly isolated in the world.

For those who held any belief in the progressive character of Zionism, the ties between Israel and South Africa ought to dispel such illusions. The truth is that the South African Zionist movement's alliance with Vorster and Israel's ties with South Africa is a continuation of a long standing collaboration by Zionism with anti-Semitism, fascism and reaction. Vorster and the Nationalist Party in South Africa grew up as an anti-Semitic as well as a white supremacist party explicitly modelled on the Nazi Party in Germany. This history has never been renounced.

OPPORTUNIST LINES ON THE PALESTINIAN STRUGGLE

Opportunist lines within the US oppressor nation left (and the opportunist left of other imperialist countries) have helped to isolate the Palestinian struggle and leave the field clear for Zionist apologists to turn the reality upside down, billing the Israeli terrorists as defenders of democracy and the Palestinian revolutionaries as "terrorists." The opportunist lines have three main characteristics. First, they accept the imperialist definition of Israel's right to exist and of the Palestinians as a "divided" or "dispersed" nation. This amounts to nothing but a total sell-out of the Palestinian people, a capitulation to the imperialist definition of realities as given. No matter how much "sympathy" there is for the Palestinians, if the situation is defined this way, there can be no true solidarity with their struggle for self-determination.

This kind of opportunist line is typical of so-called liberal or "left" Zionists who claim that Israel is a "socialist" state or has a basis for socialist transformation within its present structure. This is not true. Zionist "socialism", like all other Zionist ideologies, is built on the backs of the Palestinians and steeped in settler relations of power and privilege. It denies proletarian internationalism and cannot provide a basis for revolutionary consciousness among the Israeli settler working class.

Second, opportunist views of the struggle tend to be gradualist and defeatist, to think that a negotiated settlement is possible, and to postpone the armed struggle for Palestine to the indefinite future. The *Guardian's* "centrist" position on Palestine is a clear example of this second opportunist line. The *Guardian* talks about self-determination as the ultimate goal but meanwhile focuses its attention on the "sell-out" of the Palestinian struggle, accepting imperialism's definitions that the current negotiations will be successful in suppressing Palestinian movement. Closely linked with this defeatist view is the postponement of the struggle in Palestine to some indefinite future, and victory as depending on uniting with the Jewish working class of Israel. Thus, on December 21, 1977, Silber writes:

"But the Palestinians will remain a living time bomb ticking away inside the heart of the Zionist state—destined perhaps to link up someday with sectors of the Jewish working class in a struggle that would ultimately bring into being the democratic, secular state once prophesied by Yasir Arafat."

This position is not substantially different from that of the "left Zionists" in Israel who talk about the Palestinians as the natural allies of the Jewish working class that is reaping settler privilege by supporting their government's genocide against the Palestinians.

Third, opportunists tend to focus on Israel rather than on the US state that pulls the strings of its Israeli puppet. This is like the similar opportunist tendency to focus on South Africa instead of the US state that supports it.

BUILD THE SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT WITH PALESTINE

The struggle in Palestine is building in intensity against the combined forces of US imperialism—the US state, its European allies, its outpost in Israel, and its willing accomplices in the reactionary Arab states.

In the face of escalating attacks on Palestine the oppressor nation left must take a stand now on the side of the Palestinian people and target the US imperialist state as the backer of these genocidal assaults. It is our urgent responsibility to oppose the US role in the Middle East, its continued support for Israel and its neo-colonial ploys. We must build a solidarity movement based on active, militant support

for the armed struggle of the Palestinian people for complete self-determination in a democratic secular Palestine. There can be no compromise with Zionism, no “negotiated settlement” of the homes and lives of three million Palestinians, no “internal solution” that allows the oppression of Palestine to continue.

**VICTORY TO THE PALESTINIAN
PEOPLE!**

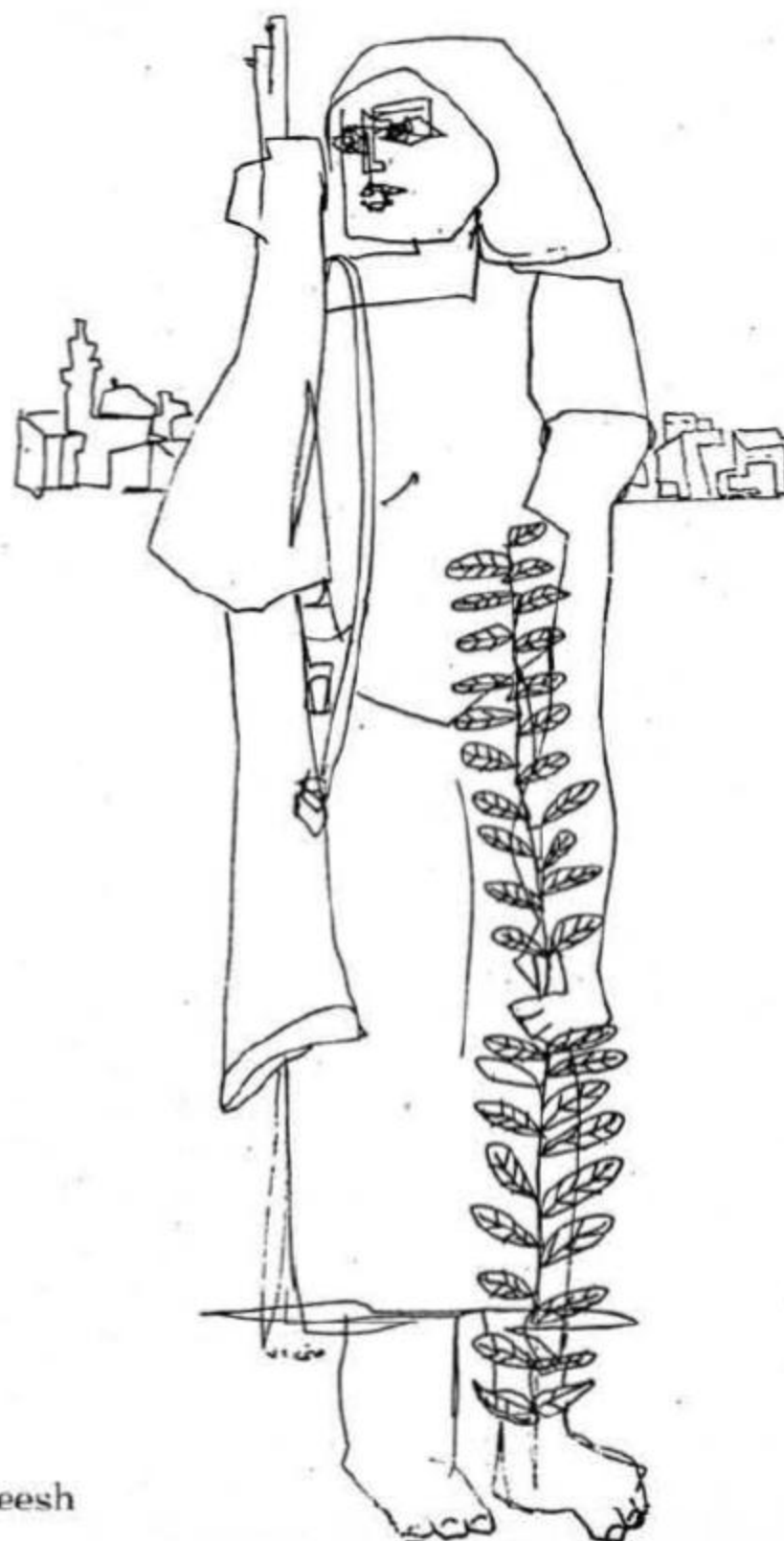
**OPPOSE THE CARTER
ADMINISTRATION'S PHONY PEACE
PLAN!**

**DEFEAT ISRAELI GENOCIDAL
EXPANSIONISM!**

I DECLARE

As long as a hand-span of my land remains
As long as I have an olive tree—
A lemon tree—
A well—and a cactus plant
As long as I have but a single memory
A tiny library
A grandfather's picture—and a wall
As long as Arabic words are uttered
And folk songs are sung
In my land
As long as I possess my eyes
Lips and hands
My own-self!
I shall declare in the face of my foe!—
A fierce struggle of liberation
In the name of free men everywhere
Workers—students—and poets—
I shall declare—
And let the cowards—enemies of the sun
Be satiated of the bread of shame
As long as I have myself
As long as myself remain—
my words will remain—
Bread and arms—
In the hands of freedom fighters!

— Mahmoud Darweesh



credit: Muna Saudi

IWY- NEW STAGE

INTRODUCTION

The International Women's Year Convention (IWY) which took place in Houston, Texas last November laid the basis for a new stage in the development of women's movement in this country. * (See note.) The victory which women won at Houston was a defeat for the State and ruling class plan to contain women's movement. It was a defeat for the right-wing's strategy to terrorize and split apart women's collective power. But most significantly, it was a victory for women's solidarity—a step forward towards international solidarity between women of oppressor and oppressed nations, towards solidarity between lesbians and straight women and between women from different classes. This solidarity made possible the

*Note: As white women, we are writing this article primarily from the perspective of the oppressor nation women's movement. We are using the term "the women's movement" or the "women's liberation movement" to define a distinct social movement which is primarily based within the oppressor nation. We do this based on the understanding which oppressed nation women have fought for, namely that their struggles for women's liberation are occurring within the context of national liberation movements which include their entire peoples. The women's liberation movement as a separate social movement mainly exists within the oppressor nation. We welcome struggle to clarify this set of relationships more precisely.

strong stands which women took on issues that the women's movement has fought for over the years such as abortion and the ERA. (Women at the Convention also moved beyond the previous level of mass struggle and consciousness by uniting in solidarity with the demands of nationally oppressed women as defined by the caucuses of Third World women.) These demands included support for Native American sovereignty, denunciation of forced sterilization, and a clear rejection of Carter's welfare plan. These clear solidarity stands taken by thousands of white women through the leadership of Third World women, represent a break with the historic pattern of white supremacy within the white women's movement which has time and again ignored and betrayed the demands of oppressed nation women.

The IWY Convention also pushed forward women's solidarity with lesbian and gay liberation. Support for lesbianism was based on the growing understanding that lesbian liberation is part of the struggle for all women's liberation. With the leadership of lesbian women, the Convention dealt a blow to the right wing attempt to target lesbians as the enemy and block women's solidarity.

The stands taken in Houston advanced the struggles of white working class women against their oppression and exploitation under imperialism. Despite the claims of both bourgeois and left media that the Convention was essentially a petit-bourgeois affair, the leading demands of the Convention addressed the interests and needs of

HOUSTON: OF STRUGGLE



credit: Breakthrough photo

Masses of women came to the Houston IWY Conference and set new terms of struggle in defiance of State-designed schemes to control the women's movement.

oppressed nation women and white working class women. There were thousands of working class women at the Convention. The fact that white women from different classes did support a program which reflected demands of Third World women and white working class women indicates the potential for building a cross class women's movement within the oppressor nation which can take up anti-imperialist struggle.

IWY was a mass event which marked changing politics and consciousness within the women's movement. Its significance for the oppressor nation women's movement lies in the direction of motion which it represents, in the real breaks that were made with a history of white supremacy and anti-gayness. (It lies in women's clear rejection of the nationwide white supremacist and male supremacist mobilizing that has been aimed at blocking the revolutionary potential of the oppressor nation working class and the women's movement.) This stand, at a critical juncture, lays the basis for a new level of struggle for anti-imperialist politics within the women's movement.

There were many obvious limitations to the politics which the Convention endorsed. Overall, the majority of women took on the issues before the Convention as demands for civil rights within the imperialist system rather than demands which are part of the struggle to overthrow imperialism. Outside of the resolution supporting Native American sovereignty, there were few resolutions which expressed an understanding of Third World peoples as oppressed nations with the right to self-determination. The imperialist system was not identified as the source of women's oppression or gay oppression, and the imperialist state was not clearly defined as the enemy of all women.

A strong movement for women's liberation cannot be built within the oppressor nation unless it is based on anti-imperialist politics and strategy. In taking up the struggle for anti-imperialist politics in the oppressor nation, we must identify clearly the contradictions which exist in each social movement, building on strengths to overcome weaknesses. Male supremacist, oppor-

tunist lines on the women's movement in the white left have always meant that the leading potential of women has been denied or opposed. If the real strengths of IWY are ignored, the left will end up tailing behind the advances which are being made and will help to block the development of anti-imperialist women's movement instead of participating in building it. On the other side, we need to define the weaknesses and limitations which were sharply exposed at IWY in order to take on the crucial struggles which need to be waged if the women's liberation movement is to develop as a leading force against imperialism.

THE BUILD-UP FOR IWY — THE LINES GET DRAWN

The context for IWY must be seen as the Carter administration's strategy for dealing with the worldwide defeats of US imperialism at the hands of victorious national liberation struggles. The strategy was based on increasing the attacks on oppressed nation people under a neo-colonialist cover. (See **Breakthrough** No. 3 for fuller analysis.)

At the same time, white working class women were made the focus of the State's efforts to maintain control over the oppressor nation working class at a time of economic and social crisis through campaigns designed at limiting women's moves towards independence. The Carter administration gave covert encouragement and support to the growth of white supremacist and male supremacist organization and movement like the Klan, the Nazis, Phyllis Schlafly's Eagle Forum and Anita Bryant's Save Our Children while publicly planning for the International Women's Year Convention. IWY was posed as a liberal showcase, a chance for women to "tell the government what they wanted." In reality, the government planned to manipulate the Convention to secure a phoney endorsement from women to cover a new round of vicious attacks on oppressed nation peoples and women. These included increased genocidal forced sterilization, cutbacks in affirmative action, attacks on abortion and gay rights, and a more

repressive, revamped welfare program.

The meaning and strategy behind IWY did not become clear to masses of women until state conventions were held to elect delegates to IWY and openly right-wing forces were able to take over the official delegations in ten states. At that point, women around the country, in particular Third World women, lesbians and women active in the women's movement began to mobilize against the threat which the right-wing forces represented. Resolutions which addressed the needs of Third World women, white working class women and lesbians were fought for especially in the California and New York conventions. In California, support coalitions focused time and energy on raising money to send Third World women, disabled women and other poor women who could not otherwise afford to go to Houston.

The response of the State and the right to this demonstration of growing women's solidarity was to target lesbians and radical women as the enemies of all women in a media blitz aimed at tearing apart developing solidarity along a line of historic weakness. Government spokeswomen like Judy Carter echoed the right-wing line by promoting a government-controlled version of women's liberation addressed to "nice women who enjoy being protected by their husbands." This was another attempt to drive a wedge between the thousands of women coming to Houston who lived in nuclear families and the thousands of lesbians who would also be there.

Ultimately all these strategies failed because women rejected these divisive tactics by strengthening their struggles for solidarity.

WOMEN'S LIBERATION AND NATIONAL LIBERATION — BUILDING INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

The most significant aspect of the Convention for the overall development of the women's liberation movement was the forward motion made in building international solidarity. This was mainly ex-

STOP STERILIZATION ABUSE / ALTO AL ABUSO DE ESTERILIZACIÓN



credit: Chicago Women's Graphics Collective

pressed through the support given by white women to the demands of Third World women as defined and led by Third World women. Historically, white supremacy has been the primary obstacle to the anti-imperialist development of the women's movement within the oppressor nation, as it is in the oppressor nation as a whole. Repeatedly white women have turned against the struggles of women and peoples of oppressed nations, have failed to uphold the right of oppressed nations to self-determination, have attempted to define colonized women's struggles on white terms and have separated out the oppression of Third World women from the whole system of national oppression which affects oppressed nation men as well as women. One of the sharpest examples in recent history has been the abortion rights struggle. For years, the white women's movement fought for women's right to abortion but ignored Third World women's demands to take up the fight against genocidal forced sterilization programs which were devastating their people.

At Houston, important steps towards changing this white supremacist pattern were taken on different levels. During the entire convention, caucuses of nationally oppressed women, delegates and non-delegates, met to develop strategy and program to present to the Convention. On Sunday, the different caucuses presented a substitute resolution for the insulting one paragraph proposal from the government's Commission and addressed separately the concerns of each national grouping. They received the support of the overwhelming majority of white women present. The "minority" resolution which was finally adopted included support for Native American sovereignty and all Native treaty rights. It also called for an end to forced sterilization, for a limitation of deportations, and for bilingual education and affirmative action.

The significance of this resolution lies in the fact that it brought important demands of oppressed nation women to the attention of people around the country and stood as a clear rejection of the calculated white supremacist organizing that has been going on

in white working class communities in the past period. In the face of mass mobilization against affirmative action, busing and undocumented workers, the passage of this resolution marks a developing consciousness among certain sectors of white women of the need to stand in solidarity with oppressed nation people. This consciousness can provide the basis for countering right-wing mobilization in an ongoing way.

The resolution points a clear direction for the women's movement to go forward. However, the basis on which the resolution was adopted, and the limitations in the anti-imperialist content of the resolution, expose key struggles which must be waged in order for the oppressor nation women's movement to actively build international solidarity. The set up of the Convention made political struggle over the contents of the resolution nearly impossible. Many of the white delegates seemed to support the resolution from a "you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours" approach instead of with the understanding that the struggles of Third World women and peoples are leading the breakdown of the system responsible for all forms of oppression. The organization of the Convention did not reflect the central role of national liberation struggles—it just gave them a slot in the shopping list of demands. It was a blatant contradiction for the Convention to adopt a resolution in support of Native American sovereignty and yet allow the KKK delegates from Mississippi to remain seated despite the initiative of Black delegates to unseat the all-white delegation.

The limitations of the resolution's content reflect the controlling influence the Convention organizers were able to exert on the delegations and the business of the Convention. A glaring example is the fact that the official resolution contains the statement "Puerto Rican women emphasize that they are citizens of the US and wish to be recognized and treated as equal." However, another resolution sponsored by Puerto Rican women at IWY calling for the freedom of Lolita Lebron and the four nationalist prisoners of war, was not even allowed to reach the Convention floor by the chairperson. Aside from the support for



credit: Breakthrough photo

A left feminist caucus at IWY demonstrated against the KKK and Carter's deportation plan, pushing delegates to take stands in solidarity with the struggles of oppressed nations.

Native American sovereignty there is no mention of the principle of self-determination for oppressed nation people. Most of the demands of this resolution, as well as of others which the Convention adopted, are demands for civil rights within the present system. There is little sense that the struggles of oppressed nation women are struggles of national liberation against imperialism. Moreover, leading national liberation struggles going on outside the borders of the U.S. are not talked about at all in the resolution.

Outside of the restrictions of the official Convention Hall, more advanced levels of anti-imperialist, internationalist consciousness and activity were evident in caucuses and demonstrations. A Chicano-led rally and picket of about 200 people protested arrests of undocumented workers by La Migra and the terrorist border patrols of the Klan. At a rally entitled "Beyond the ERA" where issues of national oppression were specifically addressed, a group of Christian Defense League (KKK) members were physically confronted by women pre-

sent. Dressed in confederate flags, chanting white and male supremacist slogans, these scum tried to march into the conference exhibit hall. Women actively mobilized and pushed them off the block, yelling "Ku Klux Klan, Scum of the land." The militant stand taken by these women pushed forward among broader numbers of women attending the convention a consciousness of the need to physically fight attacks from these forces.

A left-feminist caucus held a demonstration which called for women's liberation, lesbian liberation, the liberation of Third World peoples, an end to both Carter's immigration plan and the deportation of undocumented workers, the overturning of the Bakke decision, the unseating of the Mississippi delegation and the denunciation of the KKK and other right-wing forces.

At a lesbian caucus of over 600 women which occurred before the opening of the convention, Third World women and anti-imperialist white women led a struggle to produce an anti-racist statement which the Caucus as a whole adopted:

As lesbians we cannot separate our struggle from the struggles of all oppressed people. We recognize that the same system that oppresses us as lesbians oppresses all people of color.

Therefore, the lesbian caucus of the IWY conference, as a multiracial group, has as a basis of unity, a commitment to eliminate racism within ourselves.

We further pledge to fight against the institution of racism in the United States and internationally. In particular, we support the freedom fighters of Southern Africa and all economic sanctions and boycotts of South Africa and Rhodesia.

The anti-racist stand of this resolution led in setting the stage for struggle at the Convention itself. From the perspective of the oppressor nation women's movement, the principal strength of the Convention was that masses of white women were pushed by Third World women to take stands against white supremacy and racism, in solidarity with oppressed nation people, in a struggle that was broadcasted across the US. The serious limitations of the Convention underscore the need to build a conscious understanding within the women's movement of the function of national oppression under imperialism and the role of white supremacy in blocking progressive and revolutionary struggle among white people. A firm internationalist commitment can only be built on the basis of such consciousness. The potential which exists at this stage of the women's movement to build anti-imperialist, internationalist practice will only be realized through hard political struggle in the months to come.

LESBIANISM AND WOMEN'S SOLIDARITY

The other major breakthrough which occurred at the Convention was the overwhelming solidarity which masses of women expressed with lesbian women. This solidarity was expressed in direct opposition to the calculated efforts of the right-wing before the Convention to draw lines

between women based on their relationship to the family. Targetting women who have historically led the challenge to the white and male supremacist functions of the white nuclear family, i.e. "lesbians and radicals," the right-wing tried to split the women's movement. The resounding defeat which women gave to this strategy was a rejection of the anti-gayness which is used by the imperialists to control all women and which has historically divided the women's movement. Betty Friedan of NOW, who for years spearheaded the anti-gay campaign within the women's movement, made an impassioned speech in solidarity with lesbians' rights which acknowledged that lesbian baiting is a club used against all women. After the passage of the "sexual preference" resolution, the delegates gave the spectator stands, which were full of lesbians and women in support of lesbian struggles, a standing ovation.

In giving clearcut support to gay rights, women demonstrated an understanding that the oppression of lesbians is rooted in the need to control women. This advance in the actual practice of solidarity between straight and lesbian women can immensely strengthen women's collective capacity to fight male supremacy. On the other hand, the basis of support for gay liberation was undercut by the dominant approach to the issue which explained gayness as a question of "sexual preference." This definition reduces lesbian and gay oppression to an issue of civil rights around sexuality. It does not identify the materially valuable function of gay oppression for imperialism in helping to uphold women's roles in reproduction and production. To build on the advances made at the Convention, a struggle has to be made to explicitly link up the fight against lesbian and gay oppression to anti-imperialist struggle as a whole.

The important role which lesbians have played historically in pushing the women's movement forward was evident at Houston. Lesbians not only led the fight for lesbian rights but took leading stands on many other political issues before the Convention. Through the lesbian caucus' anti-racism statement (quoted above) and through strong lesbian presence within the more

anti-imperialist demonstrations and caucuses, lesbian women helped make the links between gay oppression, women's oppression and national oppression.

A struggle which occurred at the lesbian caucus meeting before the Convention began sharpened the understanding among many women at the Convention of the contradictions between women and the State. The Justice Department, in an effort to use the fear which the right-wing threat to lesbians had generated, made a formal request to the lesbian caucus for a liaison between lesbians and the Justice Department. This was done in the guise of offering protection to lesbians from the right-wing and the Houston police. This proposal, which was supported by some of the lesbian women, reflected a white and male supremacist line that one part of the State would side with lesbians against the right and the local pigs. It was based on the assumption that lesbians could not protect themselves against these powerful forces and implied that lesbians were isolated from other women at the convention.

In a fierce struggle, this line was defeated by the understanding that the State is not a friend of lesbians and that this was a blatant use of the right and the paranoia it deliberately created, particularly among lesbian women, to co-opt and control women's movement by undermining women's collectivity and self-reliance. After heavy debate this proposal was finally defeated. This was an important stand at a Convention sponsored by the State and counters the dangerous tendency in many sectors of the women's movement to turn to the State and the LEAA (Law Enforcement Assistance Administration) for funding for projects. On the other hand, the fact that the struggle was so sharp shows the contradictions in lesbians' understanding of the source of their oppression, a contradiction which was certainly not limited to lesbians. It also exposes a lack of understanding of the connection between the State and the right-wing. The State's strategy for the Convention was precisely to use the threat of the right to force women into compromised positions with the State.

THE STATE AND THE RIGHT WING

The State funded and sponsored this convention as a concession to the irrefutable strength of women's movement. With a tokenistic strategy, it attempted to brand the movement with its official leaders and spokeswomen. It planned to contain the women's movement with its proposal for a women's department within the federal bureaucracy. It aimed to co-opt the energy generated by women's just struggles against oppression and to neutralize or isolate leading forces for liberation. The State tried to use right-wing forces to intimidate women in ways which the State forces could not openly do themselves. The State held the Convention in Houston, the national headquarters of the KKK. The media was used to project the right-wing as a powerful, threatening force to build its influence. The right-wing scheme to target radical feminists and lesbians was an effort to divide women, to sow distrust among more middle forces within the women's movement and to push them into the hands of the State. The threat of the right-wing blown up by the State, media and the right-wing itself was used to convince women that the state-formulated National Plan of Action was the maximum women would be able to pass and that it would be very difficult to get even that much.

Both the State and right-wing strategies for the Convention were defeated. The Convention rejected the limitations of the National Plan and the major resolutions aimed at co-optation. The government's original "minority women" resolution was overturned and replaced. The welfare proposal, which as proposed was a total endorsement of Carter's welfare plan, was thrown out and instead a resolution denouncing the proposal was passed. The last resolution in the plan calling for a women's department including a Cabinet post was exposed as an effort to co-opt women's struggles and contain them in a government pigeon hole. It was defeated by a narrow margin, reflecting the intensifying level of struggle about women's relationship to the imperialist State.



credit: Breakthrough photo

The Conference gave overwhelming support to the resolution on lesbian rights. On and off the conference floor, women stressed that lesbianism was not a simple matter of "sexual preference" but an issue of women's liberation.

Women also successfully neutralized right-wing disruption aimed at the convention proceedings and countered the right-wing's efforts to divide women by giving support to Third World and lesbian women. Outside the convention halls, the right-wing was militantly denounced and confronted by women at demonstrations and rallies. Instead of terrorizing women into silence and submission, the right-wing threat actually pushed women's understanding of the need to build militant resistance to attack.

On the other hand, it is important to recognize that the right-wing was able to hold a rally of 15,000 people a few miles from the Convention, denouncing the ERA, abortion and gay rights and using a Black man as a major speaker to front for its reactionary politics. The right-wing's ability to mobilize significant numbers of white people to its Astro Arena rally exposes the serious and explosive contradictions within the white working class and speaks to the stake which white people have in the system of white and male supremacy. By appealing specifically to white women's fears of losing their security which is largely tied to the privileges their husbands receive as white

men, the right was able to bring thousands of women to the rally, in direct opposition to the politics which were being struggled for a few miles away at the Convention hall.

The fact that the right-wing rally did not try to violently attack the Convention is a sign of the strength of the women at the Convention and the State's unwillingness to openly support right-wing violence at a State-sponsored event. However, the mass base of support which the right-wing rally demonstrated is very real. The right was unable to make inroads against the collective power of women when masses of women were together, but when women are more dispersed, when the women's movement is not being watched by the whole country, the right can move under more favorable conditions and escalate its work of attack and disruption.

This regroupment of right-wing offensive has already begun to take shape since the Convention in right-wing violent attacks against abortion. In Ohio, abortion clinics have been firebombed and anti-abortion referendums are being signed into law as

the right picks up momentum. The defeat of the right at IWY can only be followed up by the women's movement if the relationship of the State and the right is understood and the base for right-wing support in the white working class is exposed.

STATE ATTACKS ON ANTI-IMPERIALISTS

Another front in the State's strategy at the Convention was the bust of a leading member of PFOC, Clayton Van Lydegraf, and two women, Judith Bissell and Leslie Mullin. These comrades, as well as Marc Perry and Michael Justesen in L.A. were busted during the IWY convention on official charges of conspiracy, accompanied by sensationalistic news stories alleging "terrorist activity." This was another aspect of the State's strategy to isolate more revolutionary forces at the Convention, to block movement towards anti-imperialism on the part of women at the Convention and to take the heat off of the real terrorists. Once again, this strategy was defeated.

Women from many different parts of the country came to the arraignment hearing and press conference in solidarity with the arrested comrades, packing the courtroom and corridor. Instead of pushing women to the right, as the State planned, the arrest of these comrades sharpened many women's recognition of the real level of contradiction that exists between the women's movement and the State. (see article on the L.A. Five for more detail)

IWY AND WHITE WORKING CLASS WOMEN

The stands taken at IWY pushed forward anti-imperialist struggles and consciousness of women in the oppressor nation working class and clearly demonstrated the leading role which white working class women play in the oppressor nation. The ERA, daycare, abortion, employment and welfare, to name just a few of the issues addressed by the Convention, are priority struggles for masses of white working class women at this time. These struggles

challenge key white and male supremacist institutions of the State such as the health system, schools, legal system, welfare and the family, institutions which are responsible for maintaining national oppression, women's oppression and class oppression under imperialism.

IWY represented a real step in fighting white supremacy, the principal barrier to revolutionary motion of the oppressor nation working class and the women's movement. Solidarity with oppressed nation women and peoples is the only basis on which oppressor nation working class women can build a movement for women's liberation or lead within the oppressor nation working class in anti-imperialist class struggle. The positions which were taken in solidarity with Third World struggles at the Convention are a step towards building proletarian internationalism.

The solidarity expressed with lesbian and gay liberation directly confronts an imperialist strategy to control and divide women. In this way it strengthens the struggles of masses of working class women against male supremacy and for their liberation.

Working class women can only develop winning struggles for liberation in the context of overall anti-imperialist strategy and movement which targets the imperialist ruling class and State as the enemy of women and all oppressed peoples and classes. The opposition to the State which developed on different levels during IWY is an advance in this direction.

IWY also demonstrated the potential for building a women's movement in the oppressor nation composed of women from different classes who will support the demands of oppressed nation women and white working class women. The cross-class nature of this movement can be a source of strength when these demands are taken up as the priorities.

FIGHTING OPPORTUNIST LINES

These steps forward are not only important for the women's movement but are an advance for anti-imperialist class struggle



in the oppressor nation as a whole. There has been no other recent event in which masses of white people have taken such clear stands in solidarity with oppressed nation peoples and women. This perspective, however, is opposed by the majority of the white left which has either ignored the Convention or distorted its meaning with condescending analyses like those of the *Guardian*. To argue, as the *Guardian* does in its Dec. 21st editorial, that the Convention was defined principally by the concerns of petit-bourgeois women flies in the face of reality and is white supremacy and male supremacy masquerading as "working class" politics. The *Guardian's* editorial, while giving lip service to the achievements of IWY undercuts the real significance of the Convention at every turn by interpreting all the events through the framework of its own opportunist politics. One of the most glaring examples is the *Guardian's* falsified description of the "minority" resolution passed at the Convention. The *Guardian* describes the content of the resolutions as support for "the rights of Native Americans" instead of saying what was

really in the resolution which was support for Native American sovereignty. The *Guardian* imposes its own backwardness on the women's movement and then argues that what the women's movement really needs is working class leadership. It also supports anti-gayness in the working class by remaining completely silent on the significance of the struggle for lesbian liberation at the Convention.

Patting the women's movement on the back for going beyond the demands of the "pure" feminists (a gross male supremacist description), the *Guardian* nevertheless stresses the reformist aspect of the Convention. Significantly, the *Guardian* does not address editorials to the "reformist" limitations of labor struggles going on. Targeting the women's movement for such criticism is just one more example of the *Guardian's* opportunist politics, a politics which is not limited to the *Guardian*. The white left as a whole has virtually ignored or undercut the significance of IWY, demonstrating the pervasiveness of opportunist politics which liquidate the leading role of national liberation as well as women's liberation. Denying the anti-imperialist significance of the women's movement and labeling the movement petit-bourgeois, adds up to a politics which accepts State definitions and collaborates with the State's plan to contain women's revolutionary potential.

While a male-dominated, opportunist left stands on the sidelines bemoaning the petit-bourgeois, reformist character of the oppressor nation women's movement, the women's movement is forging ahead, fighting the State and the right-wing and taking leading anti-imperialist stands within the oppressor nation working class. There are many clear political weaknesses which need to be defeated in the women's movement. An anti-imperialist politics needs to be fought for and working class women's leadership of the movement needs to be developed. But such development is only possible when the role which masses of women are already playing is acknowledged and respected. IWY represented a qualitative leap forward in women's fight against national oppression, women's oppression and the State. Women

are not about to let a male supremacist politics and leadership liquidate their real victories.

PFOC'S WORK FOR IWY

Prairie Fire began its work for the International Women's Year convention in August. On the basis of our political line on women's liberation, and our analysis of the Carter administration's tokenistic strategy for smashing women's and gay liberation, we identified IWY as an important arena for anti-imperialist struggle. At a time when the contradictions between the State, the right and women were escalating, we saw the possibility for massive militant women's movement developing. We believed that it was a strategic priority for us to struggle for anti-imperialist politics among broader sectors of the women's and lesbian movements than we had previously worked in.

Our work around IWY pushed out an anti-imperialist analysis of the Convention for struggle within the left, and placed IWY in the context of the State's strategy in this period of crisis and defeat. We argued for the leading role of the women's movement in the oppressor nation and the need for anti-imperialist forces to participate in building this movement. We also struggled for an internationalist, anti-white supremacist politics among the women we worked with in preparing for IWY and at Houston itself, arguing successfully for women in the Northern California Support Coalition to take up work in material support of Third World women. At Houston we pushed out anti-imperialist politics through our propaganda "Showdown at Houston," and in various caucuses and demonstrations throughout the Convention. In the face of the serious attack on our organization and anti-imperialist politics which occurred in Houston, we did not back down on our politics or abandon work at the Convention. We were able to mobilize militant support for the arrested comrades and helped build consciousness of the relationship of the State's attack on PFOC and the attacks which had brought women to the Convention.

Our work for IWY also contained political weaknesses which we have been examining since Houston. These political weaknesses are rooted in white and male supremacy and reflect the impact of the dominant opportunist lines on IWY which are current in the white left.

Our major error lay in underestimating the progressive potential of the women's movement to fight for national liberation and against white supremacy. In our preparatory work for Houston we incorrectly evaluated the level of political unity and consciousness which could be struggled for actively at the Convention. Our assessment had been that the 6 points of unity of the Northern California IWY Support Coalition would represent the advanced level of unity at the Convention. (The six points were: ratification of the ERA, reproductive rights—abortion on request and an end to forced sterilization, gay rights, child care, and a commitment to the needs of Third World and disabled women.) Instead, these 6 points represented the mass level of unity at Houston, and we found ourselves tailing the mass movement in this respect. (Once we saw what was happening at the Convention, our correct overall analysis of women's liberation allowed us to change our strategy. However, the errors had an impact on our work.) We were not armed with a strategy for uniting the more advanced forces at the conference around definite points of unity, slogans, and issues that could build an anti-imperialist core and push the rest of the Convention to the left.

The line we put forth in our propaganda "Showdown at Houston" contained a related error. This piece of propaganda placed an emphasis on targeting and exposing the right wing forces organizing against the Convention in a way which downplayed the links between the right wing and the oppressor nation working class as a whole. Unless the mass base of the right wing in the white and male supremacy in the oppressor nation working class is clearly addressed, fighting the right wing can become a substitute for fighting white and male supremacy in the working class as a whole. This approach also undercuts the struggle

against white supremacy in the women's movement. It lends itself to uniting women on an opportunist basis—against the right-wing—while downplaying the contradictions among women, instead of taking on those contradictions and uniting women on a firm basis of solidarity.

Examining our own errors and pulls towards opportunism is necessary struggle for PFOC if we are to strengthen our ability to make a contribution to building anti-imperialist women's movement in the coming period. IWY confirmed our fundamental political understanding of women's oppression and liberation and verified our overall strategic priority on struggle among women. Taking on the struggle against white and male supremacy more decisively will strengthen our ability to put this line into practice.

CONSOLIDATING THE GAINS OF IWY

Women at Houston won a significant victory and dealt a defeat to the counter-revolutionary offensive of the State and the right-wing. IWY demonstrated to people all over the country the collective power and leadership of women fighting for liberation and raised mass consciousness of the central issues facing the women's movement. The struggle before us is to consolidate the gains made at Houston to move the women's movement forward in an anti-imperialist direction. This is no small responsibility. The gains of Houston themselves are very vulnerable to attack. Once women are dispersed all over the country, the collective power and leadership of women expressed at the Convention is diffused. In the absence of clear anti-imperialist leadership, line and organization on a nationwide level, these advances are more subject to undermining moves from the State, right-wing and opportunist parts of the left. Under these circumstances, the material pulls of white supremacy on white women can come into play more strongly.

The State's defeat at Houston means that the women's movement has become even more of a threat. The attacks will be stepped up as will the government's efforts to split and divide women, to block the move-

ment from its anti-imperialist direction. Likewise, the right wing has been mobilizing a new show of force since IWY. We have seen the pressures within the women's and lesbian movements, since the Convention, to retreat from stands in solidarity with national liberation and to separate the attacks on women and gay people from the attacks on oppressed nations.

It is a critical time for anti-imperialist women to struggle and work within the women's movement and for the left as a whole to take a strong stand in solidarity with women's liberation.

An anti-imperialist strategy in the coming period must build off the mass potential expressed in IWY by addressing key issues which affect masses of women and where the struggle for anti-imperialist politics can be clearest. The gains made at IWY provide a stronger basis for building anti-imperialist politics among women in many different areas of work: prison solidarity work, international solidarity, work among lesbians, abortion/sterilization work. In all of these work areas we need to struggle to unite the most advanced sectors of women around an anti-imperialist line, nationwide. This is the only basis for building broader anti-imperialist women's movement. Without unity around an analysis of women's oppression under imperialism, it will be impossible to build a solid movement which can take on the key struggle against white supremacy and in solidarity with national liberation.

We also need to expose and struggle against opportunist lines on the left which consistently collaborate with the State in attacking the strength and power of women's movement. IWY has pushed struggle around the issue of women's liberation to a new level. It places line struggles on the subject of women's liberation in a larger context. The lines are being drawn in the world, not only in the pages of political journals. This is the time for revolutionary minded people to take a fighting stand on the side of women's liberation.

PFOC Women's Commission

NOTES FROM AN AFRIKAN P.O.W. JOURNAL

— NEW AFRIKAN PRISONERS ORGANIZATION

The New Afrikan Prisoners Organization (NAPO), formerly Stateville Prisoners Organization, are revolutionary Black prisoners in Stateville Prison, Illinois. Discussion Papers on the prison movement and national liberation, written and distributed by NAPO in the last year and a half, have made a significant contribution to anti-imperialist struggle, particularly within the prison movement. NAPO led a successful country-wide campaign which won the acquittal of the Stateville 4, Black prisoners who had been framed up on charges stemming from an incident at Stateville Prison which resulted in the stabbing of two white guards, one of whom died.

Struggles inside the prisons reflect and are an integral part of national liberation struggles in the US. Support of prison struggles against the State and against white and male supremacy, and support for the revolutionary prisoners movement by op-

pressor nation revolutionaries and progressive people is international solidarity. For these reasons, PFOC is committed to aid in building an anti-imperialist prison solidarity movement. As part of this commitment, we will continue to reprint the writings of oppressed nation revolutionaries behind the walls. We plan to develop further our own views on anti-imperialist prison solidarity in future issues of *Breakthrough*.

The following excerpts are from Discussion Papers No. 1 and No. 2, printed in *Notes From An Afrikan POW Journal, Book one*, NAPO documents of 1976 and 1977, and from NAPO's pamphlet, "Why We Support the Stateville Four." The complete *Journal*, the pamphlet, and NAPO's 1978 Liberation Calendar and greeting cards are available from: New Afrikan Prisoners Organization, PO Box 6020, Chicago, IL 60607.

SPO "PRISON MOVEMENT" DISCUSSION PAPER NO. 1

Contributions Toward the National Prisoners Movement (excerpt)

It's widely accepted that with the activities surrounding the anticipated trial of Comrade-Brothers George Jackson, Fleeta Drumgo and John Clutchette, there arose what came to be known as the "prison movement."

The activities involved in the defense of the Soledad Brothers began in 1970; thus, we use these activities . . . we use this *period* because we think it sufficiently marks a point in the history of rebellious actions in american prisons when these actions began to take a *qualitative change in character*.

What we mean to say is, the "prison movement" which we say began in the period marked 1970 was and is different in nature from past struggles in america's prisons; the "prison movement" is *qualitatively* different from all past struggles in american prisons. This qualitative difference stems from several factors, but each of these factors are related to the escalation of the struggles waged

in america by Blacks, Puerto Ricans, and other *oppressed nations* within the u.s. borders. Thus, in short, the "prison movement" receives its distinct character from the fact that it began to reflect the rising significance of national liberation struggles within the present u.s. borders.

By reflecting the central role of national liberation struggles within present u.s. borders, the "prison movement" also began to demonstrate that ideological and theoretical models and concepts traditionally adhered to, now had to be altered, and new analyses had to be made so that both theory and practice could be brought into accord with actual concrete conditions.

It could no longer be held that prisons were simply instruments of "class" rule; that prisons were simply places where the "surplus labor/surplus value" of prisoners was exploited/appropriated by those who rule; it could no longer be accepted that prisons were simply places used by the state to intimidate, coerce and control the "working class" of capitalist society.

None of these could remain the basis of our theory and practice, because it was more clearly understood that america was not *simply* a "capitalist" society. It was more clearly understood that america is an *imperialist* society; it dominates and exploits oppressed nations . . . and these dominated nations exist not only externally, but within the u.s. borders as well.

From our analysis and understanding of the nature of imperialism, and from our understanding of the relationships which exist between the oppressor nations and oppressed nations, we slowly come to see that it is the struggle of oppressed nations for liberation which play the "leading role" in the world struggle *and* in the struggle now taking place in america.

By the same token, what characterizes struggles in and around prisons in america today is the fact that they are primarily used to destroy, suppress, and contain struggles for national liberation; they are used to commit genocide against oppressed peoples (Blacks, Puerto Ricans, Native Americans, Chicanos, Mexicanos, etc.).

* * * * *

From the beginning, the "prison movement" was influenced by the struggles taking place on the street, and, at the same time, it exerted its own influence upon struggles taking place outside the walls. National liberation struggles were taking place outside the walls and class struggles were taking place outside the walls. The national liberation struggles were being waged by the peoples of oppressed nations; the class struggles were being waged by the working class of the oppressor nation.

As the degree of repression against the national liberation struggles intensified, and as economic conditions in america worsened, the prisons began to fill. The people who began to fill prisons were disproportionately Third World peoples, pointing up the racist oppression which is characteristic of national liberation struggles. Those whites which began to fill the prisons pointed up (primarily) the economic exploitation which is most characteristic of the class struggle in the oppressor nation.

The "prison movement," while pointing up the exploitation of prisoners as "workers," of prisoners as "guinea pigs" in medical experimentation, and as targets for psycho-surgery, and while able to focus on many of the other inhumane, exploitive, oppressive and repressive aspects and conditions in prisons—more than all these, what was pointed up was the connections between these prison conditions and the conditions of the masses of Third World people in america—oppressed nations struggling for liberation. The "prison movement" was able to point up the connections existing between these prison conditions, the conditions of the masses of oppressed nations within america, and those conditions experienced by other oppressed nations throughout the world.

As a result of the repression exercised upon the struggles taking place outside the walls in the late sixties and early seventies, leaders and activists in these struggles were captured and imprisoned. These were the political prisoners and prisoners of war. Their initial imprisonment was a result of consciously motivated political actions.

The escalation of struggle outside the walls also resulted in a significant increase in the number of *politicized* prisoners already inside the walls. It is important to note that the "traditional" or "conventional" models and conceptions regard the politicization of these prisoners as a result of

their being "lumpen" or "working class." The fact that they are usually Third World is given only secondary consideration. We can admit that the economic and socio-psychological ties that these politicized prisoners had with the oppressive system were such that they represent the most conscious element among us—the most conscious, that is, of the presently waging, undeclared war between themselves and those who rule. Thus, they are among the most receptive and responsive to the need to become conscious, active participants in this war. They represent those with the most *potential* to become "the people in uniform." BUT, their politicization resulted primarily from their being members of oppressed nations!

The relationship existing between the "prison movement" and the overall struggle, the relationship existing between prisoners and people outside the walls supporting struggles in and around prisons, has been and will continue to be a dialectical relationship. This is simply to say that the struggles taking place inside influence those taking place outside, while at the same time the struggles taking place outside influence those taking place inside. This dialectical relationship between the inside and the outside has had several rather distinct phases or levels. What we mean here is that there have been periods when we notice influence flowing from the inside to the outside which tends to heavily *determine* both theory and practice for outside forces, and that there have been distinct periods when influence flowing from the outside to the inside has tended to heavily determine both theory and practice for the inside forces.

But, it is our belief that what has heretofore characterized each of these phases or levels is that the "control" and "direction" of the outside forces has been more or less the norm. This control and direction exercised by the outside forces has occurred even during those phases or levels when the influence was flowing from the inside to the outside.



We believe that we're approaching (have approached) another phase or level (actually, another stage in the whole movement), where the influence again flows from the inside to the outside. The difference is that prisoners will now be more involved in the direction and control of this influence and the things which this influence gives birth to. In particular, we mean to say that prisoners are/will be the *impetus* for the formation of a national prisoners movement, and will exercise significant control and direction over this national prisoners movement. And, on a more general level, we believe that prisoners will play a significant role in the formation of a national, *revolutionary*, black political party and in the formation of a national, *revolutionary*, black united front.

We're talking about moving from the particular to the general—about moving from where we are right now, in the process of organizing the masses of black people, other internally colonized peoples, and contributing to the struggle of the oppressed people of the oppressor nation. We're talking, more specifically, here, about agitating, educating, and organizing in each prison, so as to build the foundations upon which will stand the national prisoners movement. We're talking about beginning to lay foundations which will become contributions in the building of a national, revolutionary black political party. We're talking, also, about beginning to lay foundations for what will become contributions in the building of a national, revolutionary, black united front.

To succeed in each of these objectives, we need organization. We understand that as we level blows against prison walls and the entrenched power of those who rule, we cannot entertain thoughts of decisive battle (the abolishment of prisons [as they now exist], self-determination, socialist reconstruction/society), until we have the requisite power to do so. In order to obtain this power, we must acquire and effectively use the weapon/instrument of organization. Any and all activities initiated by us in this protracted struggle must be organized.

Such organization demands that we be conscious, skilled, disciplined and united in thought and action. It demands fundamental change in our thought and in our practice; it demands the acquisition of a sense of confidence, a belief in our ability to struggle and to win, to break the chains (physical and mental) and go on to build and control a new way of life for ourselves.

Such organization is needed by the movement as a whole—by the masses of the people. Such organization is also needed by those who would help to organize the people. Just as organization is the weapon/instrument that we must have in the struggle to obtain the power that we need to effect revolutionary change, correct ideology/philosophy, theory and practice are the required weapons/instruments we need in order to insure effective organization.

Cadre, vanguard elements, those who are and who aspire to be true revolutionaries and freedom fighters—those who would be true political prisoners and prisoners of war—*these* must be organized. These must be equipped with the most correct/appropriate ideology/philosophy, the most correct/appropriate theory, arising from "concrete analysis of concrete conditions," and tested and enriched by practice.

Atiba, SPO 12/76

SPO "PRISON MOVEMENT" DISCUSSION

PAPER NO. 2

The "Prison Movement" and National Liberation (excerpt)

From the Introduction to Discussion Paper No. 2:

In December of 1976, a first draft of our "Contribution Towards the National Prisoners Movement" was sent to 'rades outside for their criticism. In their response, they raised questions which we felt had to be dealt with . . .

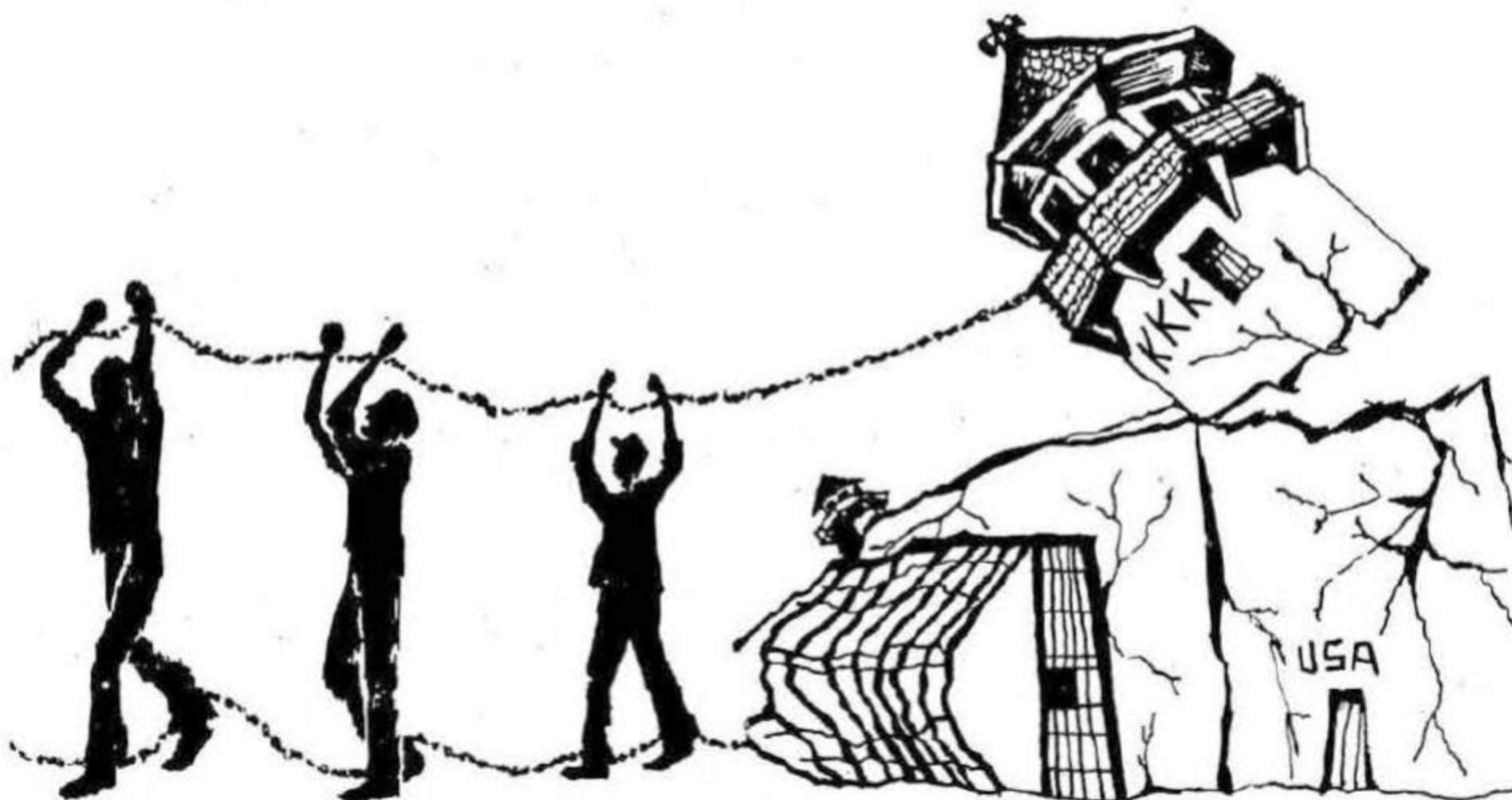
What we have to say here shouldn't be considered our "final word" or as "definitive" views. They are presented to help begin discussion on the questions; they are presented as only one means of helping prisoners and people outside the walls to build channels of communication and as further contributions to the building of a national movement among revolutionaries who happen to be in amerikkkan prisons

We encourage all readers of this pamphlet to deal with it critically—as with all study. We encourage you to send us your comments, criticisms, etc., and to begin establishing channels of communication with kamps in your state and all across the kountry, inside and outside the walls. We also encourage you to begin putting your own thoughts on paper, and in this way help to give the people sources of information and inspiration: part of the struggle remains a war to capture the minds of the masses, and to create an awareness of our oppression and a revolutionary consciousness . . .

Our reference to the Soledad Brothers and to Attica (Sept. '71) is really reference to a PERIOD (1970-1971) which we used for the purpose of our analysis, because we think that this PERIOD marks that point at which a clear, qualitative difference in the character of "prison struggles" can be noticed . . .

* * * * *

We give due recognition to all those struggles in prisons before 1970-71; to all those defense activities surrounding past prison struggles and/or individuals accused of opposing the law and order of the oppressor—but we maintain that none of these constituted a MOVEMENT and therefore did not constitute the "prison movement." We give due recognition to the fact that many people within the u.s. borders, past and present, had/have a particular understanding of the role of prisons in american (capitalist/imperialist) society. But such an understanding is not a MOVEMENT. There have been instances when struggles in prisons, prison conditions in general, and the defense activities surrounding persons accused of opposing the law and order of the oppressor have been used (either principally or opportunistically) as temporary issues in the political "careers" of groups and/or individuals. There have been articles, pamphlets and books written on prisons and prisoners, which have gone toward enlightening people on prisons and generally raising political consciousness. But none of this constituted a MOVEMENT. We also recognize that during the 1800's, the role of prisons and the struggles taking place in prisons had a very direct and intimate relationship to Afrikan people, and this relationship is fundamental to



our definition of the "prison movement." But, again, we maintain that the "prison movement" did not come into being until the period marked by Soledad/Attica.

All of the "struggles in prisons since the 1800's" have, in one way or another, contributed to and influenced the present character and development of the "prison movement." They were actions which were *quantitative* in character . . . they were struggles which represent those quantitative changes which gradually accumulate and eventually result in *qualitative* change. Thus, the "intensity" you refer to in your response did not merely represent continuous growth, as you seem to feel, but represented a discontinuous *leap*, development, and caused the transformation of "struggles in prisons since the 1800's" into the "prison movement."

Your response implies a mechanistic conception of struggle. It seems that you expect the struggles in prisons today to be the "same" as those of the past. Thus you deny or overlook "internal motion" and the possibility of new things arising. It's similar to saying that "all wars are the same" or that "all nationalism is reactionary." We can't forget, or ignore, the necessity for paying attention to new things, to things that are rising. We can't just concentrate on what has existed or on what exists at the present. We have to give due consideration to that which is coming into being. Reality is always concrete.

Therefore, when we begin to make a concrete analysis of prisons and struggles in prisons in america, we think we should investigate each separate struggle concretely. We should also check out the social, political and economic conditions prevailing throughout the country at successive periods. An analysis of this type would necessarily include a comparison of regions (i.e., struggles in northern prisons compared to those in southern prisons, and the particular conditions prevailing in both areas). It should also make special note of the national composition of prisons (i.e., the percentage of members of oppressed nations [Native American nationals, Afrikan nationals, oppressor nation nationals] in each prison and/or area).

Central to our position that a qualitative change took place in prison struggles at the period marked by Soledad/Attica is the fact that they are now intimately related to the liberation struggles of oppressed nations within the u.s. borders, particularly to the national liberation struggle of Afrikans in the u.s. During (and since) the 1800's, while no prison MOVEMENT existed, there were struggles in prisons, and some attention was given to these struggles, to the role that prisons were then playing in the u.s. But, the attention given to these struggles, the interpretation of the role of the prisons in the u.s.—what was given emphasis—usually depended upon who was making the analysis, why they were doing so, and at what point in time.

We've been made familiar with quotes from Mother Jones and Eugene Debs, for instance, which relate to prisons; we've been made familiar with material which emphasizes the "slave labor and slave wages" of prisoners, and which generally gives an economist perspective to prison and prison struggles. Such material tends to favor reform; if it approaches a revolutionary perspective, it does so from the perspective of the "dominant culture," i.e., revolutionaries of the oppressor nation.

But in the 1800's Afrikans in the u.s. were viewing prisons from a perspective which emphasized their national oppression. At that point in time, attention was naturally drawn to the South, since that's where most of us were, and where the prison system and the "criminal justice system" affected/effected us most. For instance, in 1890, Afrikans proposed the formation of a National Afro-American League. Among the seven reasons given for the formation of the League was "The odious and demoralizing penitentiary system in the South, with its chain gangs, convict leases and indiscriminate mixing of males and females."

And, in 1901, DuBois was writing that "Despite compromise, war, and struggle, the (Afrikan) is not free. In well-nigh the whole rural South the Black farmers are peons, bound by law and custom to an economic slavery from which the only escape is death or the penitentiary." We simply cite these to draw attention to some historical facts which must be considered by us today in making both general analysis/theory upon which we base our practice in national liberation struggle, and in making a particular analysis/theory upon which we base struggle in and around prisons in america. In 1890 there was "indiscriminate mixing of males and females" in the

prisons of the South; today, there is Comrade-Sister Assata Shakur in an all-male prison in New Jersey. Check it out.

Before 1863, the plantation was the "prison" for Afrikan people in the u.s. Whatever was happening in u.s. prisons before this point was, for all practical purposes, centered solely around the nationals of the oppressor nation. After 1863, Afrikans began to "assume a new status" in america; we were no longer simply chattel, property—no longer simply "outside" of the oppressor nation—and thus found ourselves in the condition described by DuBois.

Thus, it was in the 1800's that struggles in and around american prisons began to change in character from any previous struggles. This change was not *simply*, not *primarily* caused by "the rise of the working class," etc., but by the change in the composition of prison populations, especially in the South. It was influenced by the changes taking place throughout america as the country "adjusted itself" to the new colonial status of Afrikans.

After 1863, the american "criminal justice system" began to assume a new role in the control not simply of the "working class," but in the control of oppressed nations. As more and more Afrikans began to fill southern prisons, the role/function of these prisons changed. Southern prisons began to be looked upon differently and responded to differently than northern prisons. Consequently, struggles in prisons *before* the 1800's, during the 1800's, and after the 1800's, must be seen in accordance with the many variables surrounding each period.

We had a particular relationship to prisons in america during the 1800's, and prison struggles had a particular character during the 1800's. Our relationship to prisons in america during the 1800's was more or less restricted to those prisons in the South, where most of us were.

But we began to move from the South and into the North (and West). Thus, we began to assume a particular relationship to prisons in the North as well. And, as we began to fill northern (and western) prisons, prison struggles in general began to change. We're talking especially about the past 45 to 50 years.

We contend that the most notable changes in the nature of struggles in american prisons began to take place in the late sixties and early seventies, and that it was during this period that the prison MOVEMENT arose.

What began to distinguish the struggles in prisons during the sixties and seventies from those which preceded them, and thus gave rise to the "prison MOVEMENT" was the relationship that these new struggles had/have to national liberation struggles in general, and to the Afrikan liberation struggle in particular. We think that the years 1954 to 1970 had a unique influence upon struggles in prison and thus contributed to giving the "prison movement" its distinct character.

Afrikan people in america have always comprised a nation, and our struggle has always been one aiming toward national liberation, independence, self-determination. If this fact has not always been clear to us and/or to others, it simply stands as evidence of our national oppression, of our lack of power to determine our own destiny, to define our own situation and goals. We regard what is sometimes called the "black protest movement" or the "civil rights movement" as simply a particular expression, phase or stage of the national liberation struggle that we have been waging for several hundred years.

The years 1954 and 1955 are significant, since they serve to mark a distinctive stage of the struggle for national liberation. In these years seeds which had been planted centuries before, decades before, years and even days before, began to blossom. In these years also, seeds were planted as well.

In May, 1954, the u.s. supreme court declared "racial segregation" in u.s. public schools unconstitutional; this decision was followed in May, 1955, by an order to "integrate" u.s. public schools "with all deliberate speed." Among other things, these acts forced a recognition of the continued existence of the national oppression of Afrikans in america. During the proceedings and as part of the legal argument before the court, it was stated that "slavery (national oppression) is perpetuated" by the laws requiring "separate but equal" public school facilities. The decision and order by the court did not cease the perpetuation of "slavery" in america, which is to say that national oppression of Afrikan people remained a reality.



But, just as the cause of the decision and order lay in the contradiction between the oppressed and oppressor nations, the supreme court action served to sharpen this contradiction, to heighten our consciousness and to escalate the level of national liberation struggle.

The Montgomery Bus Boycott of December, 1955—this, too, was a part of what went into marking this period as a distinctive stage of struggle. The Boycott arose as a consequence of national oppression, and it gave rise to new expressions of the fundamental contradiction within the u.s. borders—that between the oppressed Afrikan nation and the oppressor nation. For the purpose of our analysis, we hold that it was the action taken by the u.s. supreme court and the Montgomery Bus Boycott that mark that period which gave rise to the “civil rights movement.”

Again, this “civil rights movement” was simply one particular expression, one particular form that the national liberation struggle has assumed. And, even within this “civil rights movement” there are phases or stages which can be distinguished. But, taken as a whole, the “civil rights movement” gave rise to and represented a new level of struggle; it represented and gave rise to a new level of consciousness. As this movement progressed, we began to see that this method, this means, was not entirely sufficient to meet our end, our objective, our need and desire. As we moved into the sixties we began to talk less about “civil rights” and more about “human rights”—less about “democratic rights” and “integration” and more about revolutionary nationalism.

(We think it necessary to note here that what some might regard as an "assertion" of revolutionary nationalism was in fact a RE-assertion. El Hajj Malik [Malcolm X] was not the first nationalist, and the RNA was not the first body of Afrikans to lay claim to land in North America. The abandonment of the "civil rights movement" arose from internal causes/forces, from the very nature of the relationship of Afrikans to america, i.e., from the contradictory unity of imperialism and colonialism, and as a result of the contradictions within the very essence of this process.)

From our own experience we can recount the type of activity occurring in prisons in the middle and late sixties. Particularly at the opening of the sixties, the struggles in prisons in america differed little from those of the 1800's. To be more precise, these struggles at the beginning of the sixties were more similar, taken as a whole, to those struggles of the 1800's than they were to subsequent struggles—to those many struggles which took place within the context of the "prison movement."

As before, there were strikes of all sorts, work stoppages, petitions, riots; individual and relatively organized acts of resistance to racism, bad conditions, etc. Many of these received some coverage by the rulers' media, and some received support from the outside (legal, concerned community residents, family and friends of those prisoners involved, etc.).

But more often than not, anything occurring in prisons at that point never became known beyond the walls. More often than not—what was characteristic of that stage—was that even if actions became known beyond the walls, it was simply a "news item." There was the air of the "exotic" about prison strikes and riots. There was no permanent, organized body in the community (beyond a few lawyers or "prison reform groups") and few, if any, inside the walls.

And, as we say, these actions inside the walls were more "exotic" than anything else. This is not to say that they did not then represent clear political questions, in themselves. But it does say that, taken as a whole, prisoners themselves did not recognize or articulate such questions and make connections. The community, taken as a whole, didn't either. There was little recognition or articulation of the fact that strikes or riots in one prison had some intimate, direct relationship with things happening in other prisons. There was no recognition or articulation of the fact that what happened in any prison was related to things happening in the community. There was, for all practical purposes, no talk of prisons as being instruments of oppression and repression used by capitalist america. There was no talk, for all practical purposes, of these instruments being directed especially toward "national minorities" and used to prevent/destroy the escalating struggle of these "minorities." In short, there was nothing approaching a "prison movement" in our meaning of the term.

By the years 1967, 1968, 1969, and as a more direct result of the "civil rights movement," a greater, more significant number of prisoners had been and were becoming politicized. It was also by 1967 that the transformation from "civil rights" to national liberation was becoming evident/distinct.

Between 1954 and 1967 many things had occurred, many things arose and faded, but exerted an influence. This influence was both external and internal—the student sit-ins and Freedom Rides; Emmitt Till and Mack Parker; Little Rock; formation of SNCC in 1960 and its move from "civil rights" to "black power"; the rise and influence of the Nation of Islam; the formation of the Revolutionary Action Movement; formation of the Black Panther Party; the influence of people such as Malik, Eldridge, Robert Williams, Stokeley, Rap; there was the Bandung Conference in 1955; the independence of Ghana in 1957; the struggle and assassination of Lumumba in 1960-61; the struggles in Algeria, Cuba, etc., etc.

All of this began to show itself in a distinctive change in the character of prisoners and their struggles. As a result, there began to be seen prisoners leaving prisons in these years who became involved in the struggle on the street, but who also began to set up organizations of ex-prisoners to support prison struggles. We think 1970 the most proper date to be given to mark that point at which a distinct stage in "prison struggles" manifested itself, giving birth to the "prison movement."

The above facts, together with: the murders of W.L. Nolen, Cleveland Edwards and Alvin Miller on January 13, 1970; the execution of justice in the form of a pig thrown off a gallery on



January 16, 1970; George Jackson, Fleeta Drumgo and John Clutchette being charged for this on February 28, 1970. Only by chance was one of these Brothers able to get a message out to his mother, who went to the B.P.P. It was due to the nature, the character, of the defense activities for the Soledad Brothers, which brought together all the features and influences we've mentioned above, and acted to give life to the "prison movement."

By their nature, the defense activities surrounding the Soledad Brothers served to reach out across the country and form a heretofore non-existing, concrete, conscious bond between prisoners. It was at this point that more—significantly more—prisoners and people outside began to form more organizations, inside and out. Definite, conscious, organized activity, on a mass, national scale, began to take place around prisons.

When people learned of the Soledad Brothers, they consequently learned not only of the contradictions in prisons, or in the "system of justice"; they also learned of the particular role that prisoners and ex-prisoners were and could play in the overall struggle—not as simple "prisoners" but as revolutionaries.

The activities surrounding the Soledad Brothers sparked a series of events which further served to cement this new stage: the Marin County Courthouse, August 7, 1970; George's assassination; the San Quentin Six; the trial of Ruchell Magee—and Attica, September, 1971.

Many subsequent prison struggles (especially the *nature* of these)—defense and support activity around activists arrested and on trial; the attention that was subsequently given to these; the spread of the concepts of "political prisoners" and "prisoners of war"—we were able to become aware of these and view them with a particular perspective largely because of the process that the Soledad Brothers activity had set in motion.

Also, by this time (1970), that "civil rights movement" which had now become to us a more genuine movement toward national liberation was under heavy attack from the enemy. The number of prisoners of war had increased due to arrest, frame-up and railroading. Armed actions were being carried out. There were underground formations. The number of political (politicized) prisoners had increased—there were more prisoners who had by now possessed a "revolutionary mentality." What began in 1970 was that the emphasis of prison struggles saw a change. The interests and objectives of prisoners changed. Prison struggles ceased to be characterized as struggles for mere reform and became—consciously—part of the total revolutionary process

Atiba
Fakih
SPO

WHY WE SUPPORT THE "STATEVILLE FOUR"

A Political Statement from the Stateville Prisoners Organization (excerpt)

- (This STATEMENT expresses the views of SPO, and not necessarily those of the "Four" or anyone else not connected with SPO.)

On January 10, 1977, two pigs were stabbed (one fatally) at Stateville Koncentration Kamp.

The state immediately began what they called an "investigation" into this action. In reality, this "investigation" was a reign of physical torture, intimidation and coercion carried out against Stateville prisoners.

After four months of "investigation," the state was forced to admit defeat, in-as-much as they couldn't determine what actually happened on Jan. 10th, or who was involved. They then chose to frame four of our Brothers.

In April, 1977, Charles Jennings was falsely indicted for murder; Thomas Blair, Andrew Craig and John Myles were falsely indicted for aggravated battery.

There is no question that these charges are without foundation, and that the state is trying to frame these Brothers in an effort to further intimidate prisoners—especially black prisoners—appease the deluded public, and otherwise preserve an image of themselves as unbeatable.

Therefore, this attempted frame-up of the Four by the state is the most immediate reason for SPO's support of them.

But we have other reasons for supporting these Brothers, and it's not possible to present those reasons without placing them in a wider, political context. Because, on that bottom, ultimately determining line, the issue here is between black people and our enemy.

For SPO to talk about its support of the Four, is for it to talk about its involvement in the struggle to liberate our people. For SPO to talk about the threat being presented to the Four by their frame/trial, is for it to talk about an aspect of the genocide which every black person in amerikkka is a victim of.

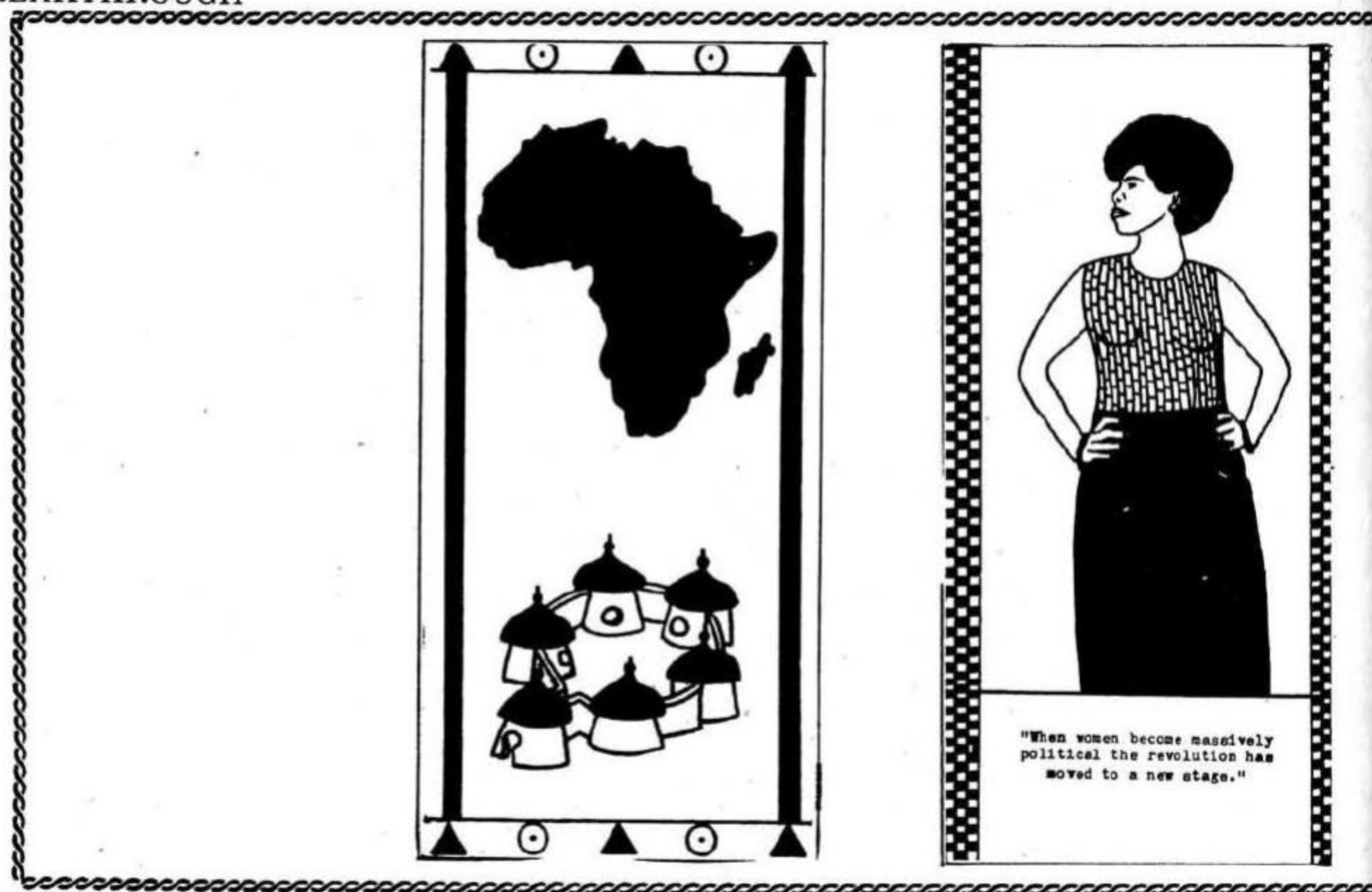
SPO feels that no Afrikan person in amerikkka can talk about these four Brothers without, at the same time, talking about themselves. None of us can ignore these Brothers and their fight against racism and injustice, without at the same time ignoring ourselves as members of a people—a nation—struggling to free ourselves from the racism and exploitation of amerikkka.

The Genocide of Black People

The Four have been indicted by a so-called "grand jury" which sat behind closed doors and labeled these Brothers as "criminals." The reality is that the Four are VICTIMS, and the real criminals are trying to frame them. The real criminals are the executive, legislative, judicial and corporate branches of the federal and state governments of amerikkka.

The real criminals were the kidnappers of our people; they are the ones responsible at this very moment for the total oppression of our people and the conditions under which we live.

The real criminals—the amerikkkan government—are guilty of the genocide of black people. Afrikan people have died at the hands of our oppressors for the more than three hundred years of our enslavement in this country. It was genocide in 1677, and it's genocide in 1977.



When our children get shot down in their playgrounds and out of the windows of their homes by blue-helmeted klansmen who call themselves police, that is genocide!

When our women are sterilized without their knowledge (or, when/if they chose to be sterilized because of the conditions that we face as a people) that is genocide!

When our children attend the schools controlled by our enemy and have their minds warped, have their creativity stifled, and generally have all motivation drained from them, that is genocide!

When we as a people are forced into the living/housing conditions in dilapidated, fire-trap, rat-infested and disease-ridden ghettos, that is genocide!

When we are forced to steal in order to survive; when our people are consciously herded into the prisons of the kountry, that is genocide!

It is genocide when we are forced to remain in a society which systematically deprives us of jobs, of decent health care, of an education that instills into us a sense of our own history, heritage and which guides us into the future.

And it's genocide when four of our Brothers are chosen by the enemy to be lynched under cover of his so-called "law". The purpose of the lynching of black folks in amerikkka has always been to "punish" those of us who dared seek freedom, who dared to strike out at the symbols and perpetrators of our oppression. Its purpose has always been to instill fear into black hearts, to paralyze black minds so that they wouldn't follow the logic of our degradation and begin to devise bold plans to end it.

The purpose of lynching black folks in amerikkka has been to maintain white supremacy and the domination of black people. The state's attempt to frame the Four has the same ultimate purpose. Therefore our support of the Four is a blow against white supremacy and a contribution to the liberation of our people.

Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War

Throughout the campaign to support and free the Four, the reality of prison will be exposed, and it will be emphasized that all of amerikkka is a prison for black people, Native Nation (In-



These cards and others, designed by Stateville prisoners, are available from New Afrikan Prisoners Organization, Box 6020, Chicago IL, 60680 for 50 cents each. Bulk rates are available on request.

dian) people, for Mexican and Chicano people, for Puerto Rican people and for the oppressor's own people.

Prisons have become a major focus of people's attention the past few years. More and more people have come to see the particular role that prisons play in capitalist society generally, and the particular role they play in the enemy's attempt to contain the struggles of oppressed peoples inside his borders.

Support for the Four is concrete support for all black prisoners, Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War: Ahmed Evans; Geronimo Pratt; Assata Shakur, Sundiata Acoli and all captured B.L.A. Brothers and Sisters; Ruchell Magee; Johnny Spain; Dessie Woods; The North Carolina Sisters; Lance Bell; the Bedford Hills Sisters . . . The list could go on and on, but the absence of support for our captured Brothers and Sisters, the absence of support for the principles and cause for which they fought and continue to fight **IN OUR INTERESTS**, must not continue.

We must realize that these pigs have no right to "judge" us. These fools haven't the right to sit in "judgement" of any black or other oppressed person in amerikkka. This we must realize, and begin to act upon accordingly. The "authority" that amerikkka exercises over us is an illegitimate "authority".

We are in this kountry, but not of it. We are here against our wills, and our treatment at the hands of these pigs can be described in no other way than the treatment of a nation of people, oppressed, exploited and victims of genocide by the u.s. government.

Each time the Four enter the enemy's kourtroom, they become symbols of our absence of the power to control our own lives!

The kourtrooms of amerikkka are not **OUR** kourtrooms. **WE** did not sit in closed rooms and "indict" the Four or any of our other captured Brothers and Sisters. Their presence in the kourtrooms of the enemy must remind us that we do not control our lives, and that our lives are being "judged"—and **TAKEN**—by our enemy and the enemy of all righteousness, justice and peace.

The kourtrooms of the enemy must become a front of battle for us; each time the Four or any of our people are inside them, **WE** must be there—demanding their freedom and doing whatever else is necessary to enforce our demands.

Support For Other National Liberation Struggles

Support for the Four is also concrete support for other national liberation struggles and for all political prisoners and prisoners of war.

Our support for the Four, which intensifies our liberation struggle, also results in creating favorable conditions for the struggle being waged by our allies.

The same criminal oppressing us is oppressing and exploiting Native Nation (Indian) peoples. With the landing of the "Mayflower", the establishment of settler colonies by the so-called pilgrims, there began the criminal plunder of Native Nation peoples' land and resources.

The criminal appropriation of Native Nation peoples' land, the even more criminal genocidal war against them, reached its height in the 1890's in the southwestern u.s., as Native Nation peoples carried on a fierce struggle against extermination, for the preservation of their lands, and to maintain their sovereignty as nations.

The struggles of Native Nation peoples continue today. It is symbolized by the court battles for the return of Native Lands; by the escalating struggle on the international level, as Native Nations seek recognition as sovereign nations, outside the "authority" of the u.s.

Their struggles are symbolized by the government attacks on Wounded Knee, Pine Ridge, and Native Nation organizations such as A.I.M. (American Indian Movement).

Support for the Four is concrete support for Leonard Peltier, Frank Blackhorse, Richard Mohawk, Herb Powless and Paul Skyhorse—only a few of the many fallen, imprisoned and hunted Native Nation Warriors—victims of the criminal u.s. government in its panic-stricken attempt to crush the movement of Native Nation peoples.

Support of the Four is a concrete demonstration of solidarity with the struggles of Mexican and Chicano peoples. These peoples also struggle against the same criminal/enemy as we do, and the objective bonds which make us allies can be strengthened when the support of the Four is understood and carried out as concrete support of all prisoners, all Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War, and in the spirit of anti-imperialist solidarity.

The history of repression and oppression of the Mexican and Chicano peoples by the criminals who control the u.s. government began with the Mexican-American War of 1846. At that time, the entire southwest (Texas, New Mexico, Colorado, Arizona, Nevada, California and Utah) was seized by u.s. troops. There began a reign of terror, oppression and extermination of the Mexican and Chicano peoples as well as the Native Nation peoples of that area.

Wherever the u.s. troops established a fort, white settlers/colonizers followed. Under the protection of u.s. "laws", police/outlaws and army troops, these 19th century colonizers seized land grant territories from the Mexican and Chicano peoples and drove the Native Nation peoples from their hunting lands and homes.

Today, over a century later, Mexican and Chicano people continue a heroic struggle for their right to land.

They now face the u.s. forest service, corporations and their criminal managers, the hired thugs who illegally acquired water rights in order to dry up Mexican/Chicano lands so as to seize them. Mexicans/Chicanos have consistently resisted, and this has involved them in armed confrontations with so-called representatives of u.s. "law".

Today, one aspect of the Mexican/Chicano peoples' struggle has contributed to the formation of a united front with the Puerto Rican peoples and their national independence struggle.

In 1898, Puerto Rico was a self-governing country, having obtained its autonomy from Spain in February of that year, after a long and bitter struggle against Spanish imperialism.

But this was a short lived reality because in October of 1898, Puerto Rico was invaded by u.s. troops, under the direction of General Nelson Miles. Direct u.s. military rule remained in Puerto Rico until 1900, more than a year after the "Treaty of Paris" was signed between Spain and the u.s.

This "treaty" illegally made Puerto Rico a colony of the u.s. During WWI, u.s. corporate interests stepped up their criminal campaign of plunder. Within a short time, the previously diver-

sified and plentiful economy of the island was transformed into a one-crop sugar economy.

Because of the u.s. exploitation and domination of the island, the Puerto Rican people have experienced poverty, disease, destruction of their culture through a u.s./european oriented educational system and other forms of genocide.

More than one-third of Puerto Rican women of child-bearing age have been sterilized under the direction of the criminal u.s. government, in its plan to eliminate Puerto Rico as a nation. The transformation/destruction of an independent economy began a heavy forced immigration into the u.s. during WWII, and today there are more than 2.5 million Puerto Ricans in the u.s.

Once highly valued as a source of cheap labor to the corporate criminals of the u.s. and their government, Puerto Ricans in the u.s. today play an important role in the island's struggle for independence.

In 1950, in support of the anti-colonial Jayuya uprising on the island, Oscar Collazo and Griselio Torresola (who was killed), members of Puerto Rico's Nationalist Party, attacked u.s. president Truman at Blair House to help expose the u.s. role in the repression of the Puerto Rican independence struggle.

Four years later, Lolita Lebron, Rafael Cancel Miranda, Irvin Flores and Andrés Figueroa Cordero made an armed assault upon the u.s. congress to bring the colonial reality of Puerto Rico to the world's attention.

These five Puerto Rican Nationalists have since been held in u.s. prisons, and are the longest held Political Prisoners in the western hemisphere. The struggle for the unconditional release of the Five is part of the Puerto Rican independence struggle.

That struggle is under attack today on many fronts. For example, the use of the so-called "grand jury" by the F.B.I. in its attempt to crush the Puerto Rican Armed Forces of National Liberation (FALN), as well as their attacks on the Mexican and Chicano movements.

These attacks by the criminal u.s. government have helped to bring about an alliance between Mexican/Chicanos and Puerto Ricans, and thus heightened anti-imperialist struggle within u.s. borders.

Lureida Torres, Maria Cueto, Raisa Nemikin, Pedro Archuleta, Robert Caldero, Jose Lopez, Andrés Rosado, Julio Rosado and Luis Rosado are among those imprisoned for their refusal to cooperate in the u.s. government's repression. They point up the role of the u.s. judicial and prison systems in attacking ALL movements of national liberation.

Other Revolutionary Forces

Again: Support for the "Stateville Four" is not only support for these Brothers as individuals; it's not only support for all Afrikan prisoners; it's not only a part of the struggle for the liberation of Afrikan people.

Support for the Four is a show of concrete solidarity with ALL oppressed peoples inside u.s. borders, which includes those in the oppressor nation—white folks—especially the revolutionaries/progressives, and the most oppressed sector of white society: white working class women.

Our support for the Four is objectively support for the imprisoned comrades of the S.L.A., the N.W.L.F., Marilyn Buck (accused of supplying arms to the BLA), and other revolutionaries of the oppressor nation who have made—and continue to make—concrete contributions to the struggles of oppressed nations; who work daily to raise the anti-imperialist and revolutionary consciousness of the white working class.

We must recognize that in defending the Four and otherwise increasing the momentum of our own liberation struggle, we must conduct ourselves in a way that exposes the prison system to white prisoners in particular, and to white people generally. We must expose the nature of the real criminals—that 1% of the white american population which oppresses, exploits and manipulates much of the entire world. Capitalism is the world's enemy.

Wherever possible, we must aid white progressive and revolutionary prisoners in their work and in their defense. We must exploit every opportunity to provide white folks generally with a correct image of their real enemy, and of their own oppressive condition . . .

African People's Socialist Party Press Statement

BLACK PRO-INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT ATTACKED

Joseph Waller, the chairman of the African People's Socialist Party (APSP) was on the West Coast for a speaking/fundraising tour between January and March. This tour was aimed at building understanding and support for the APSP's revolutionary nationalist politics. PFOC helped to sponsor this tour along with the African People's Solidarity Committee and other anti-imperialist forces in solidarity with the APSP and the Black liberation movement.

The State and its agents clearly recognized the political significance of the tour and the solidarity which was being built with Black liberation in the Bay Area. During the tour, the enemies of African liberation launched two major attacks on Joseph Waller and the APSP. These forces moved quickly to open a new stage of COINTELPRO assault by firing shots during the first major public event at which Waller spoke—an event which commemorated the date of Malcolm X's assassination. Nine days later, Waller and another APSP member, Aziza Ayoluwa, were arrested on phony frame-up charges of passing a counterfeit \$5 bill.

The APSP's response to both attacks was to expose them as part of the continuing US State program to smash Black liberation. Immediately following the arrest of Waller and Ayoluwa, supporters from all over the country called in to protest this outrageous attack. At a press conference held by the APSP and other Black nationalist forces, the arrest was publicly denounced. As a result of this political activity all charges were dropped on Waller and Ayoluwa before their scheduled arraignment in court.

This was an important victory against the State's offensive. These State attacks did not succeed in suppressing the developing movement in solidarity with Black liberation and the APSP in the Bay Area. Instead, consciousness has been built within the oppressor nation left of the State's operations against national liberation, and a commitment to build stronger active solidarity with the Black Liberation Movement is growing.

We are reprinting the statement which Joseph Waller made at the Press Conference in San Francisco in response to the arrests.

March 2, 1978

African People's Socialist Party
PRESS CONFERENCE

My name is Joseph Waller. I am Chairman of the African People's Socialist Party, an organization based primarily in the South of what is currently referred to as the United States of North America. I am presently in the San Francisco Bay Area on a fund-raising speaking tour for my Party.

Since my arrival here in late January I have been shot at, and arrested for passing and receiving counterfeit currency. The shootings occurred on February 18 during a presentation at Edison School auditorium which had been hired for that purpose, and the arrest occurred just nine days later, on February 27, on the day I was scheduled to speak to several hundred students at the Berkeley campus of the University of California.

This press conference was called by our Party and the pro-independence and progressive political forces present here today because we are convinced that the incidents I just mentioned are



credit: Merritt College Reporter

Joseph Waller, Chairman of the African People's Socialist Party, speaking in Oakland, California.

neither coincidental nor unconnected, but are a continuation of the F.B.I.'s infamous and illegal Counterintelligence Program, called COINTELPRO, and are designed to smash the reemerging black pro-independence movement and/or assassinate me.

The past attacks by the F.B.I. on black nationalist organizations generally and our Party in particular are clear and well-known evidence of the F.B.I.'s capacity and need, as the arm of the U.S. North American ruling class state, to destroy any effort by African people colonized within current U.S. borders to claim our just and deserving independence from foreign and alien U.S. colonial domination.

It is also clear to us that the U.S. government depends on secrecy and the ignorance of the people to carry out its murderous schemes against the black movement and our people, therefore we are attempting to put this information out before the people and expose this attempt by the U.S. government to smash the movement for political independence and the revolutionary aspirations of our people for peace, dignity and independence in our lifetime.

We are here to say today that our movement and our people have come too far today to be intimidated by the threat of arrest or even death. The struggle for independence is a just and righteous struggle which can only be satisfied by complete independence for our people and the destruction of the rule for profit by aliens and foreigners.

We want to make this statement today, a paraphrase of a statement by Fred Hampton who was murdered by the F.B.I. and the Chicago police department in Chicago on December 4, 1969:

"You can kill a revolutionary, but you can't kill a revolution."

Revolution is not born of ideas but of conditions. Revolutions do not occur because of what people say, but because of real conditions in the real world. This world for African people is one that has our women victimized by forced sterilization, our men, women, and children crushed by unemployment, our leaders assassinated in the streets, our communities terrorized by police, and our youth shoved into the ever increasing numbers of prisons across this country.

These conditions, then, constitute the basis of revolutionary movement in this country, and until they are arrested and killed, threats, arrests, and assassinations of black leaders will only add to the determination of our people to rid ourselves forever of this oppressive government and the bloody system upon which it rests.



FREE



credit: courtroom sketch by TF

By Judith Bissell and Leslie Mullin

Five of us, Judith Bissell, Leslie Mullin, Clayton Van Lydegraf, Marc Perry and Michael Justesen, were arrested on November 19 in Houston and Los Angeles on five counts of conspiracy and possession of explosives. Judith Bissell is currently being held on \$350,000 bail and the other four on \$200,000 each—all in Los Angeles County jails. These arrests were the result of a two-and-a-half year campaign of infiltration and surveillance of anti-imperialist movement and anti-imperialist organizations like Prairie Fire Organizing Committee. This campaign culminated in an intensive

six month blitz directed against the five of us through the combined efforts of the FBI, the Los Angeles Police Department Criminal Conspiracy Section, Attorney General Griffin Bell and others. While former FBI Chief L. Patrick Gray and his henchmen are being indicted for past FBI illegal activities against the WUO, these fraudulent schemes continue in the present unabated.

Two of us are writing this article to try and present our perspective on the history behind our arrests, why we think they occurred and what has happened in our case

THE LA FIVE!



The L.A. Five, Marc Perry, Judith Bissell, Leslie Mullin, Van Lydegraf, Michael Justesen.

so far. This article represents a beginning analysis of the two of us and has not been struggled through among all five defendants. It is a step towards analyzing our situation so that critical lessons can be drawn out for the future. There are many things that are important to discuss; however our situation with regards to the State prevents us at this time from taking on all the questions that need to be struggled over.

We see this article as a way of opening up political struggle, not only about our case but about the political responsibilities and contradictions involved for members of an

oppressor nation struggling to be revolutionaries. We consider our arrest to be part of the State's offensive to turn back developing movement among white people in solidarity with national liberation, women's liberation and against imperialism. We want to use our case to strengthen solidarity with national liberation and build anti-imperialist politics. In order to really achieve that goal we believe that we need to lay out the politics which we've been fighting for and the political errors and weaknesses that have undermined our fight for these politics in the past. This is

the only way we can build support on an honest and principled basis. We expect that the State will try to use any admission of political weakness against us, but we have learned through past experience that an open effort to take responsibility for political errors is the only way to build correct politics which can make a real contribution to fighting imperialism.

POLITICAL BACKGROUND

We are white anti-imperialists, two women and three men, who met each other about ten years ago through the anti-war movement and SDS in Seattle, Washington. Van had been a revolutionary going back to the 1930's. For the other four of us, this was the time we became committed political activists and anti-imperialists. The force of the Black liberation struggle and the Vietnamese war for national liberation led many white people, particularly students, towards anti-imperialism during this time. These forces totally affected our movement in Seattle. You didn't have to be a revolutionary to be freaked out at the level of State violence that was every day more exposed, spewing forth in color TV news coverage of the Viet Nam war. We watched Black leader after Black leader being cut down—Malcolm, King, so many Panthers. We began to recognize the violence of hunger, of State-sanctioned quack abortions, of forced sterilization and rape. The war, the struggles of oppressed nations, the emergence of the women's movement, all demanded support and you had to decide where you stood.

As women, we were affected and shaped by women's growing consciousness of male supremacy. At a certain point, male chauvinism inside SDS was seen as a clear-cut obstacle to women's participation, let alone women's leadership. Along with other women, we were part of internal and external struggles to identify and deal with this, which took the forms of consciousness-raising and separate organizing: learning how to speak and write leaflets, and building some kind of solidarity with each other so that we wouldn't get railroaded at chapter meetings. Despite the overwhelm-

ing domination of male supremacy, women were the real leaders in *most* of the struggles because of their militancy and decisive commitment, although this was not acknowledged by the politics being put forth at the time.

Between 1968 and 1969 a two-line struggle erupted in the white left concerning support for national liberation and the need to fight white supremacy and privilege both in the left and the white working class. We took a stand in solidarity with the leading role of national liberation and saw, on some level, that making this support real was going to involve heavy changes and decisions on our part. As we tried to put our politics into practice, we became all the more conscious of the way in which State violence was being used to crush national liberation movements. The growing presence of police agents, wiretaps and other sorts of dirty tricks was obvious to us although at that time we didn't know it was all part of the FBI's COINTELPRO program. The State's determination to violently wipe out national liberation movements by any means was crystal clear.

It also became clear that for white people to genuinely support national liberation, meant taking on responsibility for armed struggle against the State in solidarity with the strategies of national liberation movements. When Fred Hampton was assassinated, many people, including ourselves, reached the conclusion that solidarity required that at least some white people needed to be invisible to the eyes of the State. For the last seven years we have been committed to a politics and strategy which develops the relationship between open and clandestine work, mass and armed forms of struggle.

ANTI-IMPERIALISM VS. OPPORTUNISM

Our efforts to develop these politics correctly have been filled with contradictions. Although we started out with a commitment to solidarity with national liberation, white supremacy has time and again caused us to abandon solidarity with national

liberation and substitute ourselves for the leadership of the national liberation movements. This has turned anti-imperialist politics into opportunist politics. Over the years, we have learned from the criticisms made by national liberation movements and from the actual history of the WUO, that for oppressor nation women and men there can be no firm support for national liberation without consistent struggle against our ties to white supremacist politics and privilege. As women we have learned from hard first-hand experience how male supremacist politics and leadership operates to back up and support white supremacy.

We supported both the political line of the Revolutionary Committee, which split from the WUO, and the struggle that the RC waged to expose how white and male supremacy operated within the WUO to turn back revolutionary movement. We agree with the RC's conclusion that:

The experience of the WUO showed that it is possible to initiate armed struggle in support of national liberation movements within the oppressor nation itself, and that the necessary base of support exists among people in the oppressor nation to sustain it.

But this experience also shows that revolutionary armed struggle can only be sustained if it is carried out in the context of struggle against opportunism. White and male supremacy operated within the WUO over the years as forces to cause the abandonment of armed struggle and clandestinity.

We participated in the identification and exposure of the corruptness of WUO politics, and along with others undertook a struggle to rectify (overturn) the opportunist politics which we had held. However, in looking back to the period of rectification we now think that we did not take this struggle far enough. Once we had made a break with an opportunist political line and had defined our commitment to revolutionary anti-imperialism, we began to exceptionalize ourselves from the struggle against white and male supremacy and ignore the realities of that struggle among us.

This approach contributed to critical errors which enabled the State to move against us.

In a period when opportunist politics were being exposed and overturned, when anti-imperialist movement in the oppressor nation was building in a new way, we downplayed the threat which this movement and our work as part of this movement represented to the State.

The State clearly understood the potential threat of the struggle against opportunism. The State's agent, Richard Gianotti (alias Phil Gamache), had been instructed to identify and track down anyone not visible to the State who shared the political line of Prairie Fire Organizing Committee and who was struggling to support national liberation and the liberation of women. But we, on the other hand, did not take the threat of the State seriously and did not put anti-imperialist politics in command of all our work and relationships. This is how we ended up working with the two FBI pigs in the first place. We began doing some political work with these pigs even though we were suspicious of their stories, even though there were obvious problems with their understanding of anti-imperialist politics, and even though our struggles against their male supremacy did not get very far. We did not take responsibility for evaluating these signs, investigating further and drawing the necessary conclusions.

This is an extremely grave political error rooted in white supremacy which we must be accountable for particularly to the national liberation movements. Our efforts to build active solidarity with national liberation have been set back because the State was able to use our white supremacy to get at us. The State was out to smash us because we were struggling to fight imperialism. But they were able to use our political weaknesses to develop a relationship with us which now serves as the basis for the phony charges and stories they are leveling against us.

At this time, we can only develop a correct defense which can expose and defeat COINTELPRO-type strategies if we understand and root out the white and male supremacist politics which were the openings which allowed the pigs to move against us.

ANTI-TERRORIST CAMPAIGN

It is significant that our arrests came down at the time of the International Women's Year Convention (IWY). The specific timing of our arrests was part of the State's vain attempt to disrupt the strong, progressive movement of women which was taking place in Houston. By arresting us in the middle of the Convention and giving the arrests sensationalized news coverage, they hoped to contain the potential militance of women by raising the red herring of terrorism. Of course, what was really going on at Houston were the co-ordinated efforts of various organs of the State, like the FBI, and the right-wing, to control and terrorize the women's movement.

As the women's movement has become a stronger anti-imperialist force, it has increasingly become a target of COINTELPRO-type tactics involving agent infiltration, surveillance, propaganda smears and wiretaps. We were able to see clear evidence of this type of activity at IWY. When we were brought into the Houston FBI headquarters, we were angered to discover that it is an unmarked, unidentified building directly adjacent to the Albert Thomas Convention Center where the IWY Convention was being held. Literally dozens of agents were at the doors and windows—even behind the bushes—with binoculars and pens, identifying women around the Center.

We were not surprised when the State-sponsored media campaign against us jumped off the next day. Wild allegations as to the reason for our presence in Houston were concocted to obscure the fact that we were there to support the movement of women which was going on at IWY. We, like many other progressive women, attended the reactionary rally held by the right-wing forces at the Astro Arena in order to better understand the operations of the white and male supremacist campaign the right-wing was building. We were arrested coming out of this rally.

The timing of these arrests was part of the same State strategy that now dictates a media and propaganda campaign to paint

us as blood-thirsty assassins and terrorists. Over the past years, the exposures of the illegal and terrorist tactics which the State has consistently used around the world and in this country, mainly against Third World liberation movements, means that the State and bourgeois press can only try to justify their continued repressive role by depicting people who are fighting imperialism as "lunatics" and "terrorists."

In our case, once the fantasy is cast away, the actual charges being brought against us are pretty modest. They are conspiracy and possession of explosives. The result of the secret Grand Jury testimony where we could neither appear, cross-examine witnesses nor examine evidence, amounts to this: the State is accusing us of possessing a small explosive device with the intent to place it outside the office of State Senator John Briggs. We are not guilty of the charges against us.

Since our arrests, the combined efforts of the State—courts—prosecution—Sheriff's Department have done everything in their power to subvert our struggle to defend ourselves and expose the charges against us for what they are: an attempt to take the heat off the real crimes and terrorist activity of the State and men like John Briggs by suppressing anti-imperialist movement. While Briggs, right-wing California Senator, pushes his death penalty initiative aimed at increasing the genocide of colonized Third World peoples, the State tries to label us as murderers. While Briggs conspires to ban lesbians and gay men or anyone sympathetic to them from teaching in California's public schools, the State charges us with conspiracy.

The State is all the more desperate because in the wake of the tremendous output of time, agents and resources invested in our capture, their case against us is very weak. If the State had been so sure of our "intentions" in the situation, *why* didn't they wait to arrest us in some stage of carrying out the alleged act? Although the State is making every effort to withhold its "evidence" from us, we have reviewed the charges against us, the Grand Jury transcripts, the declarations of the undercover agents, Gianotti and Reagan, the

summaries and the search warrant available to us, and have concluded that the State's case is based on both weak and meager evidence from highly questionable sources and is based on constitutionally suspect surveillance, infiltration, harassment and government misconduct. This has consistently been proven to be the situation in other government attempts to charge political activists and revolutionaries with conspiracy—and it is so in our case. The Seattle Seven charges were dismissed for lack of evidence; the Chicago Eight overturned on appeal; the Panther 21 acquitted; the Detroit Weathermen indictments thrown out to avoid exposure of government misconduct; the Oakland Seven, acquitted. This is also the kind of quicksand on which the government's case against us is built.

EXPOSING COINTELPRO

We are committed to use this case to further the exposure of COINTELPRO and other similar government programs which are mainly used as counter-insurgency measures against national liberation movements. Although we too are targets of COINTELPRO-type activity, we will never forget the massive murder, imprisonment, and frame-up of Third World peoples that is the chief objective of such government programs. In the past weeks, L. Patrick Gray and two other high-ups in the FBI have been indicted by the Justice Department for their role in illegal FBI activities directed against the WUO. The fact that the indictments are limited to misconduct against an oppressor nation organization, and do not in any way deal with the bulk of the State and FBI attacks which are directed against the Black and other national liberation struggles, must be exposed. The current indictments of a few top-level FBI and Justice Department officials are a State attempt to cover up past and present counter-insurgency operations, by sacrificing a few fall guys. We need to push beyond this and use this case to obtain information and documentation of FBI activities. We want to do this not just to prove our innocence, but to take leadership from

oppressed nation forces and to join with others to further the broad exposure of the US State's genocidal strategy against national liberation.

The State is aware of our objectives and has been fearfully trying in every way to prevent such political exposure. On February 2, secret Grand Jury indictments were handed down in the case, taking the place of a scheduled preliminary hearing which we had been preparing for. The secret Grand Jury, composed of jurors hand-picked by local judges, allowed the DA to exercise total control over the proceedings to make sure he got exactly the indictment he wanted and that no information got out to contradict the State's lies about us and our case. We have been denied the opportunity to confront the FBI's undercover agents who are witnesses against us and to examine evidence in open court. The DA takes less than 5% of all felony cases through the Grand Jury. It is clear that the FBI is afraid. These subterranean proceedings only serve to reveal their weak case.

Our super high bail is another example of their strategy to limit our ability to press for exposure and put forward an analysis of the State and this case. We have been held four months, some on one-half and one on three-quarters of a million dollars bail—despite the fact that the standard bail for our charges is only \$5,000. Recently our bail was lowered, but this was only a token gesture since the bail is still astronomical.

The State claims that the purpose of bail is to make sure that the defendants appear for their trials. But this is a ridiculous effort to cover the real purpose of bail which is to keep defendants, over 75% of whom are Third World, in jail. A bail of \$5,000, \$500 or \$5 accomplishes the same end if it can't be paid. In our case, the State's hatred and fear of politics in solidarity with national liberation and women's liberation are the real basis for our ransoms. Supporters of the right-wing Minutemen charged with many more serious counts of the same charges as us, including possession of virtual armories, have been released on their own recognizance or on bails of \$15,000 or less. Bail is meant to support white supremacy and suppress movement against it.



Judith Bissell and Leslie Mullin

credit: courtroom sketch by TF

THE FIGHT AGAINST WHITE AND MALE SUPREMACY CONTINUES

In developing a strategy to counter the State's attacks, we have been involved in continual struggles with our own pulls towards white supremacist definitions and conceptions of this case and politics of our defense. Historically, the fight for *pro per* status has been advanced by Third World peoples, like Ruchell Magee, Skyhorse and Mohawk, who have taken leadership of their own cases in the fight to break through

the totally white supremacist terms of "legal" trials.

We undertook a struggle for *pro per* rights ourselves because we knew that our politics were on trial in this case and we wanted to be able to speak to those politics. In order for us, the women, to get *pro per* we had to confront the male supremacy which has denied women the same rights as men to represent themselves. We saw that women, particularly Black women at SBI (Sybil Brand Institute in Los Angeles, where the

two of us are being held) had been struggling to defend themselves for years but without formal rights or even a law library. As white women, with a lot of public attention and resources focused on our case, we were able to get the court to agree to extend certain rights to us and even to agree to build a law library at SBI.

However our struggles for *pro per* contained many contradictions, and in the end what was positive about it got turned into its opposite. The chief contradiction was our tendency to make *pro per* the central issue while losing sight of our overall political goals in the case, which were to expose the State and COINTELPRO and to advance solidarity with national liberation and self-determination. Instead of being a means to this end, speaking for ourselves in court became the primary thing. Our tendency to place ourselves at the center of every concern became dominant over mounting the strongest offense/defense which

could advance anti-imperialist politics. We equated the significance of our struggles for *pro per* with the struggles that oppressed nation peoples have waged for this right. By exceptionalizing our role in this struggle, while equalizing our situation with that of oppressed nation comrades, we undermined and downplayed the leadership of Third World peoples in exposing and fighting the criminal injustice system. While we focused a lot of energy fighting for our right to defend ourselves, we didn't spend enough time figuring out our political defense and building a defense team that could ensure that we would be able to take the initiative against the FBI during the course of the trial. Similarly, we had illusions that the government would give us white people all the time we needed to figure out how to defend ourselves.

Instead, in early March the State moved through its mouthpiece, right-wing Judge Leethum, to railroad the case to trial. This was clearly done in order to win a convic-

Mail is an important form of support for political prisoners. You can write to the five comrades at:

Judith Bissell, No. 4610251, P.O. Box 54320, Los Angeles CA 90054
 Michael Justesen, No. 4605786, P.O. Box 54320, Los Angeles CA 90054
 Leslie Mullin (booked into the jail as Grace Fortmer), No. 4610250,
 P.O. Box 54320, Los Angeles CA 90054
 Marc Perry, No. 4605785, P.O. Box 54320, Los Angeles CA 90054
 Clayton Van Lydegraf, No. 4614177, P.O. Box 54320, Los Angeles CA 90054

If you are interested in more information about the case, in making a financial contribution to help meet the costs of the defense, or in discussing the issues raised here, please get in touch with:

PFOC, P.O. Box 42, Altadena CA 91001

-or-

PFOC, P.O. Box 40614 Station C, San Francisco CA 94110

STOP THE RAILROAD!

FIGHT STATE ATTACKS ON NATIONAL AND WOMEN'S LIBERATION!

tion and prevent discovery of FBI materials and activities. Leethum knew the difficulties we would have in preparing an adequate defense in such a short time, and the railroad was geared to make us give up our *pro per* rights or go through with a trial we weren't prepared for. The railroad forced us to make some political choices and we decided to give up *pro per* and get lawyers to represent us, which resulted in a stay (postponement) of the trial until mid-June.

We believe that we were coerced into giving up *pro per* and will fight to regain those rights as co-counsel with our lawyers. However, we now see that the main political issue is not *pro per* but our ability to expose COINTELPRO. We believe that by working collectively with our present lawyers we will be able to accomplish these ends.

The struggle around *pro per* is just one example of the political struggles against white supremacy that are necessary if we, as white political prisoners, are to develop



Judge Julius Leethum

this case on an anti-imperialist basis. Within these struggles we have become clearer about the importance of women's leadership in developing the fight against white and male supremacist terms and conceptions.

THE CARROT AND THE STICK IN PRISON

Being in jail for the past months has starkly shown us how white and male supremacy are used to control people on the inside as well as on the outside. The white and male domination and almost total control which the jail has over the most minute details of our lives is an exaggerated reflection of our experience growing up as women in the US. There is no autonomy, responsibility or dignity without a struggle. We are girls, ladies, broads; there is virtually no decision you can make on your own, including when to dress or go to sleep or whether you can put sugar in your coffee. You have no rights, only privileges—and these can be withdrawn at any time.

It is possible to get more privileges based on white supremacy and cooperation and collaboration. It seems like more white women than Black or Third World women become trustees or get choice work assignments, although we do not have statistics on this.

In special housing—high security lock down—where we have been since our arrests, there are two classifications. "Dangerous" prisoners like ourselves are housed in Section 5000, a primarily white section. Section 4000 is over 50% Black and Third World, and women in this section are classified for "Mental Observation." The security is equal in the two sections but the treatment of prisoners in 4000 is the worst in the whole jail, with the least privileges. It is also the place in jail where women's solidarity and concern for each other is strongest.

Because we are political prisoners and were *pro pers*, we are treated somewhat differently from other prisoners. On the one hand, there is a tremendous amount of security and harassment that comes down

on us and our visitors. We are separated from other women to a large, though not total, extent with the incredible explanation that it is to protect both us and other prisoners. On the other hand, the threat of police violence that always hovers over Black and Brown prisoners has been less so for us. Our treatment can in no way be compared to the brutalization of political prisoners like Assata Shakur, Dessie Woods or the Bedford Hills and North Carolina sisters. The Sheriff's office also made it clear while we were *pro per* that they wanted the price of our representing ourselves to be exceptionalizing us from the other women prisoners. They had a deliberate organizing strategy to tell other women that you have to be a genius to represent yourself. This is one of the ways they tried to subvert the meaning of winning the law library for prisoners besides ourselves. Talking to other women has helped break this down and has taught us how women, especially Third World women, have been struggling to defend themselves for years without a law library, without books, but armed with conviction, consciousness and dignity.

* * * * *

Since being arrested we have been pushed to take on the struggle against white and male supremacy in the world and in ourselves in sharper ways than ever before. Being in the hands of the State makes the choices involved in supporting anti-imperialist politics very clear. We are constantly seeing how alliance with white and male supremacy could make our lives easier—in the short run. This recognition has made us grasp more firmly that we cannot defend anti-imperialist politics or build solidarity with national liberation unless we are committed to fighting the pulls towards white and male supremacy at every turn and refuse to make compromises.

Since our arrests, political support and struggle of comrades has been essential in giving us strength and helping us figure out what needs to be done. We would like to be in struggle with other comrades and forces and welcome communication to that end.

Venceremos!

SUPPORT the black liberation movement!

The African People's Solidarity Committee (APSC) has committed itself to the purchase of a mimeograph machine for the African People's Socialist Party (APSP) as a demonstration of concrete solidarity and material support for the black liberation movement within current US borders.



This machine will be of invaluable help to the APSP in its work of organizing the masses of black people within the US against US imperialism.

It will allow the APSP to more easily continue its leadership in the effort to Free Dessie Woods, publish pamphlets and otherwise advance the cause of black liberation.

WE ARE ASKING FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR THIS EFFORT FROM
ALL PROGRESSIVE PEOPLE. UHURU!

Please send contributions to:

APSC
Box 71 San Anselmo,
Ca. 94960

¡QUE VIVA PUERTO RICO LIBRE!



Speech by Angel Rodriguez Cristobal, representative of Liga Socialista Puertorriqueña, Chicago, March 4, 1978

This speech by Liga Socialista Puertorriqueña representative Angel Rodriguez Cristobal was delivered at a March 4th demonstration and rally in Chicago demanding independence for Puerto Rico, freedom for the four Puerto Rican Nationalists, the imprisoned grand jury resisters and all political prisoners, and support for the Chicano/Mexicano liberation struggles. The Chicago event was one of a number held across the country as part of a national mobilization sponsored by the National Committee Against Grand Jury Repression, a formation which includes the Puerto Rican and Chicano/Mexicano forces which have been leading the struggle against the repressive grand juries. Through these grand jury investigations, the US is attacking the Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional (FALN), a clandestine Puerto Rican independence organization which has carried out over 60 bombings in the last four years, as well as the Puerto Rican liberation struggle as a whole, and its strongest supporters in the Chicano/Mexicano movement.

The Puerto Rican and Chicano/Mexicano movements united firmly in the face of

these attacks, to pursue an aggressive strategy of defending the right of their peoples to engage in all forms of struggle necessary to win their liberation. As a result, the government attack was turned on its head, into a victory. The subpoenaees remained steadfast in their refusal to collaborate in any way with the grand jury witchhunt, and nine Latino activists were jailed as a result. But the FBI could gain no information from them, nor from anyone in the Puerto Rican communities of Chicago which they harassed in their search for the FALN. Nor could the government break the unity of the Chicano/Mexicano people and the Puerto Rican people. So the March 4th mobilization marked a number of victories in the struggle; Maria Cueto, Raisa Nemikin, Jose Lopez, Roberto Caldero, and Ricardo Romero were all released from jails, and many of them participated in the various demonstrations around the country. The demonstrations also marked the 24th anniversary of the attack on Congress by the Nationalists. Andres Figueroa Cordero, released after 23 years to return to Puerto Rico, has led in demanding the release of his compañeros still imprisoned,



credit: Workers World

Jose Lopez, Roberto Caldero and Ricardo Romero upon their release from jail. The release of these comrades was a victory of resistance against the grand jury repression which has been aimed at national liberation movements.

and in comparing the grand jury subpoenees to them, as a new generation of political prisoners committed to Puerto Rican independence.

As this issue of **BREAKTHROUGH** goes to press, the four remaining subpoenaees, Pedro Archuleta from New Mexico, and Julio, Andrés, and Luis Rosado, are coming up for a hearing demanding their release from jail in New York.

The speech which we are reprinting here was delivered against the backdrop of escalating revolutionary struggle within Puerto Rico itself. In January, commandos of the Fuerzas Armadas de Resistencia Popular captured the town offices and police station of Manatí, leaving slogans calling for independence, revolutionary struggle, and victory to the militant strikes going on in Puerto Rico, by the electrical workers union (UTIER), the bus drivers union (TUAMA), and others. Late last year, Alan Randall, a CIA operative responsible for coordinating anti-labor and anti-"terrorist" planning for the colonial administration, was brought to justice and executed by a group called the Labor Com-

mandos. Ever since, both counter-revolutionary violence and armed forms of struggle by the popular forces have escalated. Juan Caballero, a Teamster organizer, was tortured and killed by a police-based Death Squad. Miguel Cabrera, another Teamster, was arrested and accused of Caballero's death and that of Randall. As the strikes continue, marked by increasing militance and police attacks, numerous acts of sabotage have been carried out. The generators of the San Juan airport were bombed. The colonial administration advised all tourists in the city to remain within the tourist quarter, El Condado, or on board the cruise ships, as their safety couldn't be guaranteed.

Within the US, the leadership of the National Committee Against Grand Jury Repression has pushed people to recognize that the Puerto Rican and Chicano/Mexicano peoples must not stand alone in their struggles or in the face of escalating attacks and violence by the State and right-wing forces (like the Klan patrolling the border with Mexico). The attempts by the imperialists to crush the resistance of the Puerto Rican people or to pick off the

leadership of their struggle for independence and self-determination, must be decisively repudiated and defeated. Active and concrete solidarity with Puerto Rican independence means making a fundamental break with white left politics that wrongly try to impose their own timetables and definitions on the struggles of oppressed nations. Instead, we need to identify the forces within the oppressor nation who can begin to unite *now* on the basis of internationalist solidarity.

The Liga Socialista Puertorriqueña, whose representative made this speech, was founded in 1962 by Juan Antonio Corretjer, a former vice-president of the Nationalist Party under Don Pedro Albizu Campos. The Liga was a proponent and participant in the Frente Revolucionario Anti-Electoral at the time of the colonial elections in 1976, a united front formation which also included the Puerto Rican Communist Party and the Movimiento Socialista Popular (MSP). In discussions after the elections,

this led to the formation of the Frente Revolucionario Anti-Imperialista (the FRAI) which has included the Liga, the MSP, as well as other non-party organizations, such as independentista women from MIA-Mujeres Integrete Ahora. The Liga Socialista, a Marxist-Leninist organization,* believes that in order for Puerto Rico to be free, an anti-imperialist front of all revolutionary forces on the island must emerge, and that a vanguard party will emerge out of the armed and clandestine struggle rather than the mass struggle.

The National Committee Against Grand Jury Repression can be reached at 2403 West North Avenue, Chicago, IL 60647. There are also local chapters throughout the state of Colorado, in New Mexico and Arizona, and in New York City.

The Liga Socialista Puertorriqueña publishes a number of pamphlets and periodicals, available from Aptdo. 283, Guaynabo, Puerto Rico 00657.

Compañeros y compañeras,

Before I begin I would like to extend fraternal greetings to the compañeros who are here tonight and to those who imperialism has prevented from their being here tonight. The Liga Socialista Puertorriqueña is grateful for the Puerto Rican and Chicano/Mexicano compañeros for having invited us here to participate in this very important act. I think this act is well dedicated to the compañeros Oscar Collazo, Lolita Lebron, Rafael Cancel Miranda, Irvin Flores, and Andrés Figueroa Cordero, as well as the compañeros Andrés Rosado, Luis Rosado and Julio Rosado and Pedro Archuleta. It is evident that this act as well as the names I have just mentioned clearly demonstrate how two peoples can unite under immense oppression and capitalist exploitation, in the manner that intense heat binds metals. Those that exploit us are enemies of the world, and they are equal in their exploitation regardless of whether they are called Puerto Ricans, Chicanos/Mexicanos, Venezuelans, Panamanians, Iranians, Blacks or Native Americans. This evening I would like to relate particularly to the case of the exploitation and oppression of Puerto Rico. Our people have been repressed and terrorized by Yankee imperialism [since] prior to military occupation of Puerto Rico in 1898. I will attempt to give you an account of some of the acts of terrorism and violence on our people. The Yankees destroyed our economy by controlling more than 85% of it. The Yankees disbanded our people by the forced emigration of 2 million of our brothers and sisters. The Yankees have sterilized more than 1/3 of our women. The Yankees have used more than one-half-a-million Puerto Ricans to fight and die in their vicious wars of imperialist pillage and destruction. The Yankees have destroyed or substituted our wildlife and to some extent our language. The Yankees have conducted all sorts of criminal experiments, such as the experiments with napalm and other defoliants upon our territory before using them on our brothers in Viet Nam. The Yankees have experimented with all sorts of contraceptives upon our women. The pill was first distributed for experiments in Puerto Rico in 1955.

They are desperate with the stoic resistance of the Puerto Rican people. In this fit of desperation they intend to escalate the terror and violence to our people. So they announce their attempt of statehood for Puerto Rico. The purpose of statehood was none other than the authorization to

rob us of our natural resources such as copper, nickel, petroleum, the air, our land, and so on. All these maneuvers, *compañeros*, are geared towards the conversion of Puerto Rico into a military and industrial embankment from which they can continue exploiting and encroaching on the entire world, particularly our Latin American and Caribbean brothers. But inside the United States, these maneuvers are geared to strengthen the oppression of the Chicano/Mexicano, the Black, Native American and Asian people.

In order to give all these plans a legal character they announce statehood for Puerto Rico. Under imperialism, Puerto Rico will always be a colony; only by statehood it becomes a legal colony. And this [is] where I would like to begin to denounce the repression that the shareholders of Wall Street are carrying out as part of an escalation of violence and terror against the Puerto Rican workers in order to satisfy their colonial accomplices. This account is in reference to the [UTIER] workers' strike of the Autoridad de las Fuentes Fluviales [Water Resources Administration] or the electric company. Wall Street also tells its colonial bosses "You want to be Americans, then prove your loyalty to us. Repress the workers of the Union de Trabajadores de la Autoridad Metropolitana de Autobuses [TUAMA] also, and see if you can convince us." To prove this, the Yankees have given the colonial bosses all the assistance they need because they want to demoralize these two strikes. For in doing so they will also demoralize the independentista sector. This will enable them to continue their plans for the exploitation of Puerto Rico. Wall Street has also told the colonial bosses, "You have petroleum. Help us get it, because we need it."

The colonial bosses, in order to prove that they are more American than Nixon, readily accepted the plan of the executioners of the imperialist plan. This is why they refused to settle the strike, hoping the strikers would eventually give in. But the strikers have learned many lessons from previous experiences. The AFF strike is two months old. Over 200 acts of sabotage [have been committed] which have resulted in the loss of over \$4 million. Out of these 200 acts, 65 of them were with explosives.

The strike has captured the attention of all the Puerto Rican people. Practically all the working class sectors have unconditionally supported the strike. Simultaneously, the independentista sector has begun to reorganize in such a way that they are able to strike at the enemy without being repressed.

"Los golpes enseñan" or: "The whacks teach you a lesson" is a Puerto Rican saying, and a good example of this is the Popular Front that was organized against the Marine forces in Vieques. The people of Vieques have learned their lesson well, as was evidenced by their recent demonstration with courage and dignity, when 40 fishermen, along with their families, were able to interrupt the operations that imperialist forces carry out on Vieques. I will relate more to this later.

There is a popular imperialist saying that goes, "The big fish will swallow the little fish." But the reality is another thing. The big fish will swallow the little fish if the little one is not organized, and only if the little fish allows the big fish to choose where and when to confront each other. Evidence that midgets can struggle against giants is the heroic example of Vietnam. The Chicano/Mexicano and Puerto Rican can struggle together to avoid precisely that imperialism swallow us up one by one. The ants are little but they come together and they drag big worms to their caves, and there consume them. The Puerto Rican and Chicano/Mexicano people along with the Latin American and Caribbean countries can do the same to defeat the enormous imperialist worm.

Unfortunately at the present time the Puerto Rican and Chicano/Mexicano people do not have sufficient support within the North American left. The left in this country is intoxicated with Marxist theories that they learned at imperialist universities. At the present time this left cannot see what is going on in Puerto Rico as a result of a plan which is not simply historical or theoretical speculation but a concrete reality. This concrete reality is the massive genocide of the Puerto



credit: Claridad

Striking bus drivers and their supporters in San Juan. Puerto Rican workers are conducting a militant and unified defense against repressive colonial violence directed at the public employee strikes.

Rican people at this moment, which the U.S. armed forces intends to intensify to benefit the exploiters of Wall Street.

It is unbelievable that in 1978, even after the experience of Vietnam, and after the terrible experience of Nazi Germany, the North American left can still sleep peacefully, and remain peaceful while Vieques is being used night and day by the Marines as a target practice area, not taking into account the residents of that little island.

Not only are they using us as target practice, but also they have invited the Brazilians, Chileans, Argentinians, Norwegians and French gorillas to do the same. It is hard to believe that the North American left has remained calm when a group of fishermen along with their families with the support of the people of Vieques are willing to collectively risk their lives and occupy the area of operations of the Marines as a protest to the oppression of their people. I would also like to add that while this was going on, helicopters of the Marines were trying to capsize the fishing boats by flying low and they criminally succeeded in overturning one of the boats.

It is hard to believe that they can remain calm when the Grand Jury in a fit of hysteria drags from one jail to another a compañero Chicano like Pedro Archuleta. These things are hard to understand by oppressed people. An Iranian student was telling me the other day, "Something must be going wrong or happening to North American society when apparently it is only moved when it watches television or when it is reading some science fiction novel, while it remains quiet and indifferent when they see it in reality." The destiny of a society, whose emotions and sensitivity can be programmed in computers every year and distributed so that they can be manifested in speeches and cries against imperialism on May Day and afterwards sit and eat turkey to give

thanks to a great nation on Thanksgiving Day, is certainly tragic. We the oppressed people cannot wait for this cycle to break to begin the struggle for our liberation.

It is for this reason that the Liga Socialista Puertorriqueña considers it an obligation and a commitment to unconditionally support the actions of clandestine organizations that are struggling for independence and socialism for Puerto Rico and for the cause of the Chicano/Mexicano people, until the real vanguard of our struggle is initiated. We know that this will expose our leadership and our organization to sudden attack by our enemies but this is preferable to becoming a part of the impotent and indifferent cycle of the so-called North American left and their alleged allies.

¡VIVA PUERTO RICO LIBRE!

LONG LIVE THE STRUGGLE OF THE CHICANO/MEXICANO PEOPLE!

DOWN WITH THE IMPERIALISTS!

—Angel Rodriguez Cristobal
Liga Socialista Puertorriqueña
March 4, 1978



credit: Breakthrough photo

Mexicano activist Ricardo Romero emphasized the uncompromising solidarity between his people and the Puerto Rican independence movement at a March 4th rally in San Francisco.

ARMED STRUGGLE AND REVOLUTION

Speech at a PFOC Public Forum

December 18, 1977

INTRODUCTION

Around the world, national liberation struggles against imperialism are moving towards victory through the determined armed struggles of entire peoples. Over the past 30 years, national liberation movements have shown that there is no way to oppose the armed might of imperialism except with the armed power of the people. However, within the white left of the US oppressor nation, the subject of armed struggle has primarily been dealt with in abstract, academic terms—a remote question of debate about other people or the distant future. The urgent need to take up the responsibility which oppressor nation people have to act in solidarity with national liberation, has mainly been denied. When the issue of armed struggle is taken up, the particular situation of white people within the US has usually been ignored. For members of the oppressor nation to take the issue of armed struggle seriously, we must understand how white and male supremacy have determined white people's relationship to armed force historically, and how this affects the oppressor nation working class today. This is absolutely necessary in order to develop a revolutionary politics and strategy which can support concretely the strategies of national liberation movements.

In November, five anti-imperialists, including Clayton Van Lydegraf, a leading member of PFOC, were arrested on charges of conspiracy and the possession of explosive devices. This State attack on anti-imperialism and PFOC coincides with the escalating international campaign against "terrorism". This is imperialism's response to the armed victories being won around the world. (See PFOC public statement for a fuller analysis.)

In responding to this arrest and the heightening contradictions between anti-imperialist movement and the US imperialist State, we see the importance of analyzing the history of armed struggle in the US particularly in the last twenty years to learn the lessons which that history contains. We believe that open struggle over



the politics of armed struggle is critical for the white left at this time if we are to overturn our history of opportunist betrayal of national liberation movements and move revolutionary solidarity forward.

At a public forum which PFOC held in December, a woman member from the National Collective of PFOC gave a speech on armed struggle and US history. We are reprinting an edited version of this speech in an effort to push out debate on this subject.

* * * * *

In Zimbabwe and Namibia, the peoples' revolutionary forces are nearing victory in their armed struggle for independence and self-determination from the US backed regimes of Ian Smith and John Vorster. Armed struggle in Palestine—ranging from civil war to hijackings—puts the issue of a homeland for Palestine on the front pages of the world. The national liberation strug-

gle of the Nicaraguan people has surged forward with armed battles being led by the FSLN and the native Indian population supported by massive strikes and protests against the vicious Somoza government. In New York and Chicago, the FALN bomb Mobil Oil and City Hall while hundreds of Puerto Ricans refuse to talk to the FBI while it searches for the so-called terrorists responsible for the bombings. At the same time, major labor unions in Puerto Rico go out on strike, and the Montebello police station in the town of Manati is taken over by three *guerrilleros*—the first attack on colonial police since 1950—who expropriate money and arms. Contrary to bourgeois media lies, these are not the isolated actions of a few fanatics, which have no support from masses of people. When South Moluccans struggling for independence were killed in Holland, more than 30,000 people attended their funerals. And tens of thousands across Europe



National liberation movements have shown that there is no way to oppose the armed might of imperialism except with the armed power of the people.

rioted and demonstrated to protest the murders of members of the Red Army Faction in German prisons.

From the pages of Newsweek to the San Francisco Chronicle come the cries of TERRORISM. It must be stopped if the Western world is to be saved, say the headlines. Newspapers make lists of terrorist organizations which become longer every week in order to give legitimacy to the stepped up repression that is needed to contain revolutionary movement. The real situation is turned on its head. As the cries of terrorism increase, as Jimmy Carter in Alice in Wonderland language talks about human rights and says that the situation in places like Brazil and Iran is getting better, imperialist militarization is really on the rise. Within the US, terrorism and crime are the excuses for turning Black and other oppressed nation communities into military occupation zones. In California, Governor Brown talks about human dignity and

quietly arranges for six new prisons to be built. In the face of growing resistance come the combined strategies of neo-colonization and outright repression.

The defeat of US imperialism in Southeast Asia proved that in fact masses of people were involved in armed struggle and could win victory over a mighty enemy.

To cover up this fact whole nations struggling for freedom are now labelled as terrorists. The struggle for national liberation in Zimbabwe is put down to mad cannibals murdering priests, nuns and harmless white people. On the front pages of newspapers, the Palestinian nation is reduced to a gang of terrorists intent on murdering Israeli children. These descriptions try to hide the reality that the overthrow of imperialism and colonialism is happening all over the globe.

When we speak of national liberation leading the struggle against US imperial-



ism, it has concrete meanings that must be recognized and fought for. The struggle for national liberation and independence takes place on all levels. When Native Americans occupy Wounded Knee it is a part of the struggle for sovereignty just like the struggle against forced sterilization of Native women. The exposure of the Justice Department's COINTELPRO program against the Black nation and the actions of the BLA (Black Liberation Army) are two fronts in the struggle for Black liberation. The FALN bombings and the killing of CIA agent Allen Randall in Puerto Rico, go along with mass campaigns for Puerto Rican independence and the defense of the five Nationalist prisoners.

Armed struggle is an essential component of national liberation against imperialism. The defeat of imperialist and neo-colonialist regimes cannot take place without the armed overthrow of imperialist domination. The necessity for armed struggle flows from the irreconcilable conflict of class society: the conflict between oppressed classes and peoples against the ruling class and the State which is an organ of class rule based on armed force. Under imperialism the chief form this conflict takes is between oppressed nations struggling for national liberation and imperialist oppressor na-

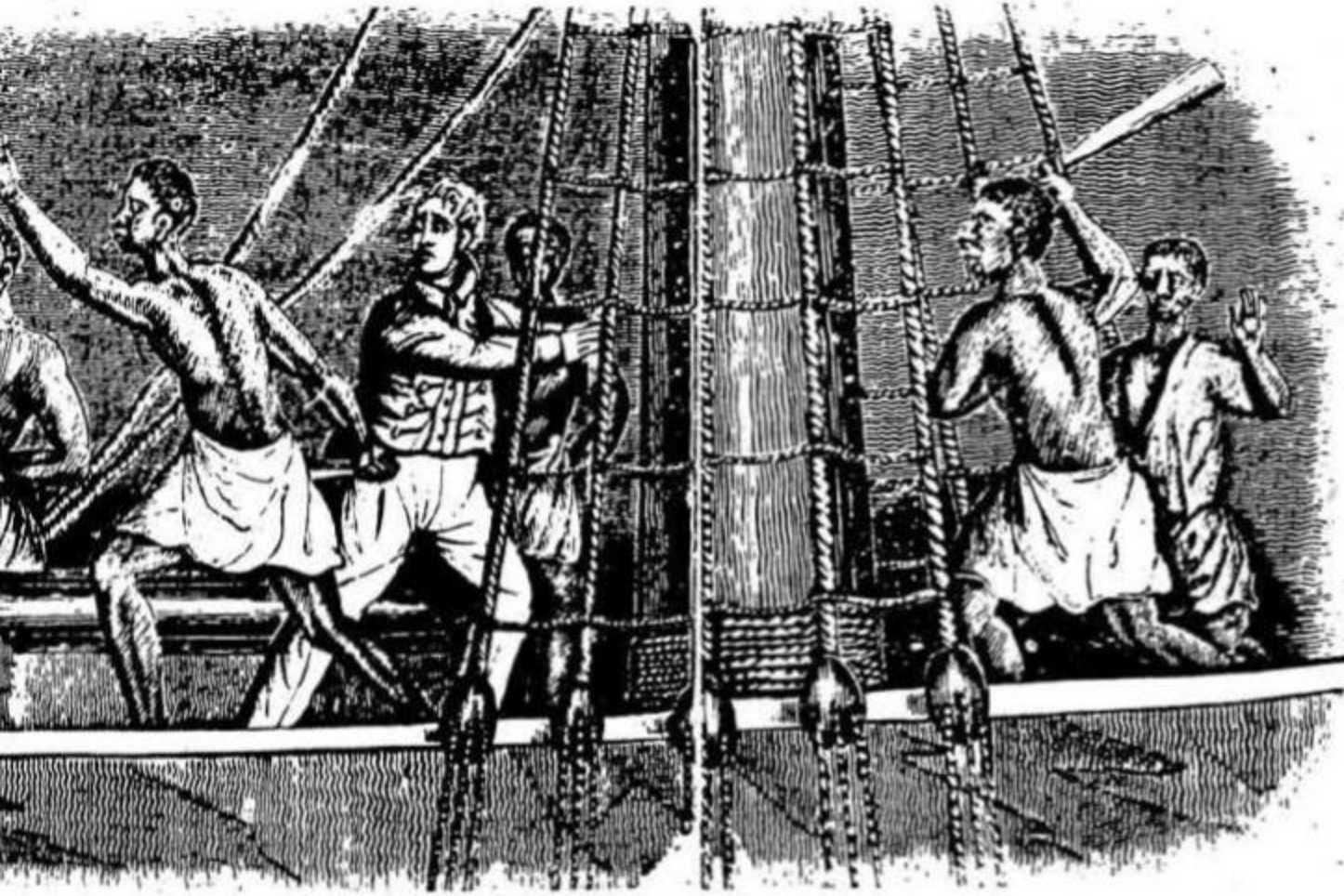
tions trying to maintain their domination and control.

As members of an oppressor nation, we have a critical responsibility to understand how the armed might of the US imperialist State has been brought to bear, historically, on oppressed nations around the world; how national liberation movements have fought to gain independence and freedom; and how the US oppressor nation working class has been involved in this conflict. By examining this history we can begin to move forward to build active revolutionary struggle within the oppressor nation in solidarity with national liberation.

George Jackson wrote:

Armed struggle is at the very heart of revolution. If the problems of the people cannot be redressed because the necessary resources are in the hands of a relatively few families and individuals, it means that we are going to have to seize this property. Seizing property has always meant some form of war. Some form of Armed Struggle.

At every point, class society rests on violence and arms to maintain itself. The development of the State as a machine for the oppression of one class over another goes side by side with the growth of society,



This 18th century engraving depicts the rebellion of kidnapped Africans on the slave ship *Amistad*. Black people have waged armed resistance against colonialism since the first Europeans invaded African lands.

into irreconcilable classes. This is a commonly accepted theory by many who call themselves Marxist-Leninists. But the political meaning of this development of the State has been generally ignored and distorted by the majority of the white left in this country.

The history of capitalism/imperialism is the history of conquest and genocide of the oppressed nations of Africa, Asia and the Americas. Slavery, the wholesale slaughter of Africans, the extermination of millions of indigenous peoples of the Western Hemisphere, along with the institutionalization of rape, torture and other forms of counterinsurgency form the backbone of the development of the US State. This goes along with the occupation of oppressed nations and colonies by the police and armies of their European colonizers. The system of prisons, laws and courts has been directed at controlling captive nations. They are instruments of genocide. Oppressed nation peoples have been violently disarmed and denied the right to self-defense.

This terrorism against colonized nations has a brutal and unending history which continues to escalate to the present day. The violence of the lynch mob and the

sterilization of oppressed nation women is backed up by the full force of the imperialist police, army, its B-52's and its neutron bombs. This is the real terror of imperialism. This is the reality which we must look at when we talk about fighting imperialism.

In the face of these genocidal assaults, oppressed nations have declared war. These wars date back to the earliest contact with Europeans. Natives of the Caribbean fought against forced labor in Columbus' gold mines until genocidal war wiped them out. On the North American continent, King Phillip, a Native American warrior and chief battled the colonists in the 1600's. Native resistance has continued unbroken. As Leonard Peltier, Native American POW, states:

When colonial white society invades and occupies our territory, these are not called criminal acts. But when Native people stand up and resist, these acts are considered criminal. But these are not crimes. These are political acts in which our people stand for the right of self-determination, self-dignity, and self-respect against the cruel and oppressive might of another nation.

Black people's war against their colonization began in their homeland in Africa

with wars against the slave raiding parties. It continued on the slave ships. Whenever they could Black slaves revolted, seizing the ships and returning to Africa. In the slave plantations of the Caribbean, Latin America and the US, slaves ran away and liberation heroes such as Gabriel Prosser, Denmark Vesey and Nat Turner formed guerrilla armies and plotted war and sabotage against the white slave owners. In the 1960's massive urban revolts of Black people burned the "inner cities" of the US. SNCC, RAM, the Black Panthers organized armed self-defense and the Black Liberation Army emerged to counter the increasing repression against the Black movement.

In the Mexicano/Chicano nation, the history of armed resistance to political, military and cultural occupation has the same continuous character. From Juan Cortina to Las Gorras Blancas to Reies Tijerina and the struggle in Tierra Amarilla, armed action to resist imperialist takeover of lands and lives has played a key role.

The Puerto Rican people have fought fiercely throughout their history against colonialist domination—from Betances and the Grito de Lares to the attack on the House of Representatives in 1954 and the development of the FALN.

* * * * *

Women of oppressed nations have been in the forefront of their nations' struggles for self-determination, independence and sovereignty. The women of Viet Nam and Africa have demonstrated women's enormous capacity to participate in all areas of national liberation struggle including armed struggle. The fierce repression which US imperialism has brought to bear on courageous women like Lolita Lebron and Assata Shakur exposes the threat which women fighting in national liberation struggles represents to the US State.

Women of oppressed nations have led in exposing the use of white and male supremacist violence against women as an instrument of colonial control. In Viet Nam,

women formed Committees to Defend the Right to Live to combat the rape and violence against women and children which was being used to terrorize the whole nation. In the US, women like Dessie Woods, Joan Little, Yvonne Wanrow and Inez Garcia have fought against rape and violent sexual attack, taking a stand against the history of colonial violence against Third World women.

The leading role which oppressed nation women have been playing in armed struggles around the world, begins to overturn the historic disarmament of women which began with the origins of class society.

The transition from primitive communism to exploitative class society was accompanied by the development of the domination of men over women. The overthrow of the system of mother right (descent through the mother) and matriarchy, was not accomplished over night. It was a long struggle which often took violent forms. Some evidence of this can be seen in the myths which tell of male heroes conquering Amazon nations in bloody wars. These violent struggles finally resulted in male rule which was guaranteed on all levels of society through the domination of all women by men. Since this time, women have been denied the use of weapons in order to control women and assure their powerless position. The disarmament of women has been necessary to perpetuate class rule. The full participation of women in victorious national liberation movements has shown that the arming of women is an essential part of social revolution.

The relationship of white women to arms must be understood in the context of the history of armed struggle within the oppressor nation as a whole.

* * * * *

The imperialist State could never have maintained terrorist control against oppressed nations without a mass base of support and cooperation in the oppressor nation. Overall in the history of the US, the white working class has allied with the rul-



credit: LNS

Angolan women march in Luanda, May Day 1976. The armed mobilization of colonized women is essential to the victory of national liberation.



Miami, 1972 — Vietnam Veterans against the War demonstrate against US occupation and military action in Vietnam, expressing active solidarity with the Vietnamese national liberation struggle.

ing class against oppressed nations, using arms and violence to suppress and destroy colonized peoples. Poor whites were armed to form slave patrols, cowboys and "pioneers" were given free rein to clear the country of Native Americans, the terrorist work of the KKK has been supported from the time of Reconstruction and its use of lynching to suppress Black movement, to the current KKK patrols on the Mexican border directed against undocumented workers. The entire armed State apparatus, from the military to the police to the prisons depends on the collusion of white working class people with the imperialist State.

It is very significant that the only times when the State has armed white women has been to enlist them to fight against oppressed nations. This was the role of the fighting frontierswomen and it is the role of women in the armed forces today who have finally been deemed capable of pushing the button on the ICBM at a time when national liberation is winning. This has also been the role of women in the armies of settler colonies like Israel and Rhodesia.

In order for white women to really fight

the source of their oppression in the imperialist system, they must understand how women's access to arms has been controlled in various ways by the State to maintain imperialist interests. When this is understood white women can play a leading role within the oppressor nation in overturning white and male supremacist definitions of armed struggle which are so pervasive in the US, and develop revolutionary concepts and leadership in their place. Over the past ten years increasing numbers of white women have begun to take militant stands in solidarity with national liberation, advancing the small but important history of white people's participation in armed struggle against empire.

* * * * *

John Brown's attack on Harper's Ferry in order to fight slavery stands out in US history. Another less well known example of white people taking stands against empire is that of the 260 Irish immigrant draftees who deserted the US Army in the Mexican-American War to fight on the side of Mexico. In recent history, we have



Emily Harris



Bill Harris



Joe Remiro and Russell Little

credit: New Times

Surviving SLA members are all imprisoned and are under continuing State attack for their actions in solidarity with national liberation. Emily and Bill Harris will be on trial in June for challenging the Hearst empire.

the examples of the 60's where white youth, including many women, pushed by the rise of national liberation around the world, developed widespread forms of armed attack on the symbols and institutions of imperialism. The last years of the 60's were marked by hundreds of bombings of ROTC buildings and corporate and State targets. Through the GI movement and organizations like VVAW, white working class people massively demonstrated their opposition to imperialist war and their solidarity with the struggles of the Vietnamese.

The early history of the Weather Underground Organization was an important breakthrough for the white left. Significant numbers of white people went underground to try and take up their responsibility for fighting US imperialism in solidarity with national liberation. These actions pushed large sections of the white left to understand the need for white people to not just sit on the sidelines and cheer for wars of national liberation but to take active responsibility themselves. It forced people on the white left to take their political choices more seriously and to see that those choices determined the way in which the State would treat them. The response of the State to comrades like Marilyn Buck, Susan Saxe and the SLA demonstrated clearly that white people who try and act on their commitment to national liberation are targeted accordingly.

* * * * *

Although there were significant advances made by the white left in the 60's and early 70's, opportunism in the form of white and male supremacy has continually operated to undercut and erode support for national liberation and to blunt solidarity in the face of State attack. During the Chicago conspiracy trial, Bobby Seale was chained and gagged for resisting the racist railroad. The other defendants, who were white men, and the movement outside did not organize militantly to support Bobby, didn't effectively make the connections between the attack on him and the government's offensive against the Panthers and the entire Black liberation struggle. This amounted to a desertion of the Black movement in the face of the enemy. The government seized the opportunity to murder Fred Hampton and Mark Clark. Just days after this murder, the LA Panther office was attacked by SWAT. When George Jackson was killed in 1971, the response was limited and small and the State was able to follow this up with the assault on the Republic of New Africa in Mississippi. It was the Black, Puerto Rican, and Native American prisoners of Attica who led in defying these attacks by taking a stand against the genocidal prison system. Support for these comrades was also weak. If hundreds had massed at the gates of that prison, lives might have been saved.

Zayd Shakur was murdered and Assata Shakur and Sundiata Acoli were arrested



1967 — Republic of New Afrika (RNA) founded. August 18, 1971 — pre-dawn vicious, unprovoked attack on Jackson, Mississippi RNA headquarters, resulting in the incarceration of eleven Prisoners of War — the RNA 11. RNA 11 Defense Fund can be contacted at POB 6796, Washington, D.C. 20020

following a white supremacist State terror campaign directed against the BLA. Again support from the white left was extremely limited. Much of the white left collaborated with the State in denouncing the BLA as terrorists, adventurists and narrow nationalists.

In its beginnings, the WUO struggled against forces which denied the leading role of national liberation and the necessity for armed struggle. But it quickly began to abandon these politics. In 1971 the WUO issued "New Morning," a statement which didn't talk about the leading role of national liberation struggles but instead put forth the concept of the "Youth" nation. This statement to the "youth culture" actually supported imperialism's definitions of the power relationships between white and Third World people and between men and women all in the name of becoming one with the masses of youth who were going to make the revolution. The Panther 21 sharply criticized this line, pointing out how "New Morning" ignored the differences between oppressor and oppressed nation people, downplayed the struggle against white supremacy and liquidated the central importance of armed struggle for anti-im-

perialist movement. The WUO never responded to the criticisms of them by the Panther 21. They continued to carry out limited armed actions for the next few years but never tried to engage the rest of the white left in real struggle about the use and purposes of their actions. They never tried to examine the material pulls of white supremacy in the organization or make self-criticism of white supremacist errors. They never took on the struggle against male supremacy and the impact of male domination in the organization which was a very serious problem from the beginning. In 1974, the WUO published *Prairie Fire* which was an important contribution to anti-imperialist politics. But no sooner had they put it out than they began organizing against its political direction. By 1976, the WUO was thoroughly opportunist, using its past as a cover for the fact that it had abandoned armed struggle and its internationalist commitments entirely. The history of the WUO is very important for us to understand now because it shows how a positive move towards revolution can turn into its opposite when there isn't a clearly defined revolutionary line to keep people moving on the correct path. It exposes some of the ways in which white and male su-

premacy operate to pull white people away from revolution. It points out the necessity of naming those pulls and fighting them every step of the way. These are lessons we need to learn if we are serious about making revolution, and breaking with opportunism. The imperialists will always give cover and support to opportunism on the left because the rulers understand that the politics and strategy of opportunism lead people away from revolution. Opportunist politics are about compromise, conciliation and peace with the empire and its most backward elements.

Right now, the *Guardian* is a leading representative of the politics of betrayal of anti-imperialist movement. Politics which deny the leading role of national liberation within the US, which denounce the FALN and the armed actions of the five Nationalist prisoners, the BLA and the Red Army Faction as "terrorist" or "narrow nationalist"—protect the US State. Politics that preach about a multi-national working class, call police murder of Black children an example of class exploitation rather than national oppression and deny that US history is one of conquest and enslavement actually collude with attempts by the State to smash national identity and the revolutionary leadership provided by oppressed nations. The *Guardian* tries to dictate to the oppressed nations that they must hold back their struggle until white workers are massively fighting the system. This puts national liberation struggles on the timetable of the oppressor nation. Waiting till the majority of the white working class is ready to take up arms means that the most backward get to determine the struggle for the most advanced. Despite the fact that the *Guardian* professes to be anti-revisionist, in reality its politics are the same as those of the revisionist CP's of South America which attacked Che and the MIR or the politics of the CPUSA which are those of peaceful transition, pacifism and class collaboration.

Silber, the *Guardian's* editor, uses other arguments to attack armed struggle. He argues that armed actions give the State the opportunity to denounce "real" armed

struggle and help convince the masses to support State repression. This is the same argument that the Chilean CP used to attack the MIR. This argument denies that people are capable of understanding anything about the real violence which the imperialist system is based on and the need to fight armed force of the State with the armed resistance of the people. By insisting that "real" armed struggle is mass armed warfare, Silber belies the history of armed struggles which began with a relatively small number of active participants and then grew to the stage of People's War. Such an opportunist line on armed struggle only helps US imperialism maintain its stranglehold on oppressed nations around the world as well as on the oppressor nation working class.

* * * * *

In the arrest of the LA 5 and the elaborate program of infiltration and surveillance which led to their arrests, we can see that the State is determined to contain white people who are struggling for revolutionary politics and against opportunist stands on armed struggle. The LA 5 are five comrades who support the political line of the Revolutionary Committee which split from the former Weather Underground Organization because of its white and male supremacist politics and its abandonment of a revolutionary position on armed struggle. The State recognized the threat of people who held politics which speak to the responsibility of oppressor nation people to act in solidarity with the armed struggle of oppressed nations and targeted them accordingly.

These arrests have shown us the absolute need to understand the State's strategy and its methods of operating to suppress movement within the oppressor nation which has the potential to challenge imperialism. It has also pushed us to see that revolutionary struggle within the oppressor nation cannot move forward unless we correctly analyze our history and our weaknesses and thoroughly overturn the errors which have persistently characterized white people's rela-



September, 1971 women's march against Presidio Army Base, San Francisco.

tionship to armed struggle.

We cannot exceptionalize ourselves from revolutionary struggles worldwide. We need to study and learn from the experiences of other struggles to understand how winning strategies are built. On the other hand, we must develop a line and strategy which reflect the conditions and contradictions of being part of an oppressor nation working class. Applying blueprints from other struggles will not work. We must develop revolutionary strategy based on our situation as part of an oppressor nation which aids the strategies of national liberation movements and is accountable to them. A revolutionary strategy must also be based on an understanding of women's leading role within the oppressor nation and a commitment to overturn male supremacist domination which blocks women's leadership in all areas of anti-imperialist struggle.

We believe that political struggle on the issue of armed struggle is an urgent matter for the left. The goal is to apply line to move revolutionary practice forward. In the words of Josina Machel:

This is the time
we were all waiting for.
Our guns are light in our hands
the reasons and aims
of the struggle
clear in our minds.

The blood shed by our heroes
makes us sad but resolute.
It is the price of our freedom.
We keep them close in our hearts
from their example new generations
—revolutionary generations—
are already being born.

Ahead of us we see bitter hardships.
But we see also
our children running free
our country plundered no more.

This is the time to be ready
and firm.
The time to give ourselves
to the Revolution.

Josina Machel



BUILD THE ZIMBABWE MEDICAL DRIVE

The Zimbabwe Medical Drive is a worldwide campaign initiated by the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) to support the liberation fighters in Zimbabwe by raising medical supplies and building political solidarity. All donations will be channeled through ZANU to the Patriotic Front. The medical supplies will be used to care for the liberation fighters and their families, refugees and the people in the liberated territories of Zimbabwe.

The people of Zimbabwe believe that 1978 will be the decisive year in their struggle against colonial and imperialist domination. As the Patriotic Front nears military victory, Ian Smith, the US and other imperialist powers are scrambling to try to force neo-colonialism onto the people of Zimbabwe. This is a particularly critical time for progressive peoples throughout the world to show their solidarity with the just struggle of the Zimbabwean people. PFOC urges all individuals to contribute generously, and all organizations and groups to mobilize their memberships to build the Medical Drive.

Tax deductible contributions should be made out to: Zimbabwe Medical Drive/Third World Fund. Send checks and requests for more information or literature to:

Zimbabwe Medical Drive
P.O. Box 1211
San Mateo, CA 94401

VICTORY TO THE PATRIOTIC FRONT!

GOT TO BE

Got to be strong when the dam breaks down
Holdin back the waters with rage
Got to be strong when the dam breaks down
Got to turn history's page
Say liberation to the state!
Say liberation cannot wait!
We got to be strong when the dam breaks down
Holdin back the waters with RAGE.



credit: Kathy Pryor

STRONG

Terror is used to make us submit
 Terror is used against us
 Terror is the newspaper
 that paints evil pictures
 Terror is the guardsman
 with evil in his eyes
 Terror is the court
 Won't hear the people speak
 Terror is the jail
 won't lower the bail
 Terror is the man
 fbi badge in his hand
 Terror is called DEATH
 They try to call it suicide
 Terror is a tactic
 that the enemy relies on
 Terror is iron and law
 In its cold cruel claw
 It claims the power to commit genocide
 Terror creeps in and tries to paralyze
 Terror is the power
 to rape and sterilize
 There is one thing that we got to realize
 And that is the strength
 to turn back
 the REAL
 Terrorist tide.

Got to be strong when the dam breaks down
 Holdin back the waters with rage
 Got to be strong when the dam breaks down
 Got to turn history's page
 Say liberation to the state!
 Say liberation cannot wait!
 We got to be strong when the dam breaks down
 Holdin back the waters with RAGE

There was a Native woman named Anna Mae
 Died by a terrorist gun
 There was an African man, Steven Biko
 Died by a terrorist club
 There was a Mexicano man in Houston
 Kicked in a ravine by terrorist boots
 And another one in a squad car
 Died by terrorist bullets
 There was a Black man, Fred Hampton
 Murdered by terrorist machine guns
 There was a Black prisoner, a fine man
 a revolutionary-wise man, George Jackson
 Died by terrorist guardsmen
 There were men and women in German jail cells
 Who called themselves Baader-Meinhof
 They acted in the interest of world revolution
 and died by terrorist jailers
 There were many Vietnamese men, women, and
 children
 Who died by terrorist bombings
 There were many Black men, women and children
 Who died by terrorist hangings
 There are many political prisoners
 Who die at terrorist hearings
 We are talking about peoples' lives!
 We are talking about peoples' lives!

Got to be strong when the dam breaks down
 Holdin back the waters with rage
 Got to be strong when the dam breaks down
 Got to turn history's page
 Say liberation to the state!
 Say liberation cannot wait!
 We got to be strong when the dam breaks down
 Holdin back the waters with RAGE

by Terry Foreman

JOIN IN SOLIDARITY WITH RAF!

A Call to Defend the Red Army Faction, Excerpted from the Emergency International Russell Tribunals

The following excerpts are taken from a document issued by the Russell Emergency Conference* which calls on progressive forces to defend the Red Army Faction prisoners of war in West Germany. Revolutionary and progressive forces in Europe are moving to establish an international investigation of the government murders of RAF members Andreas Baader, Gudrun Ensslin, and Jan Raspe; and the attempted murder of Irmgard Möller. These attacks were carried out at maximum security Stammheim prison on October 18, 1977, by German state security in coordination with its commando raid in Somalia against Palestinian guerrillas. These executions, labelled as "suicides," follow the killing of other RAF members in jail: Ulrike Meinhof, raped and hanged in her cell in 1976, and others who died because medical care was deliberately denied them.

The blatant German state murder of the RAF prisoners was met by armed attacks and street demonstrations of tens of thousands who struck at German imperial targets in France, Italy and elsewhere in Europe. The Palestinians who hijacked the German airplane in Somalia put forward demands in solidarity with captured RAF prisoners, demanding their release from prison. The imperialist response was the commando raid, and headlines proclaiming

"Germany's Entebbe," made West German collaboration with Israel in attacking Palestinian guerrilla fighters a clear fact.

We need to understand the basis and connections of the highly repressive actions of the German state, the repression developing across Europe, and the moves within the US to develop greater "anti-terrorist" military forces. The murder of these comrades is part of the intensifying imperialist military and propaganda campaign against "terrorism." This campaign is primarily a response to the victories of national liberation struggle on a world scale, and also against organizations and movements in the oppressor nations of the US, Western Europe and Japan who fight in solidarity with national liberation against imperialism. The media barrage against "terrorism" is imperialism's cover for their fascist attacks on oppressed nation peoples, movements and leadership. Steven Biko and many others are murdered in police custody in Azania; Israel bombs Palestinian towns and refugee camps claiming they are terrorist bases; and in the US national liberation fighters like George Jackson are murdered in prison. In the oppressor nations, at times when white people have engaged in armed solidarity with national liberation, they have come under murderous attack as with the RAF and SLA.

*We have reproduced these documents without editorial changes, as we had no German original against which to check the translation.

West Germany, an integral part of the world-wide imperialist system, is tied into the political/economic interests and

strategies of the US empire. German counter-insurgency forces operated with the full support of a number of European governments in their search for the RAF guerrillas, mobilizing right-wing intelligence/snitch networks of people who collaborated with the state to repress all "suspicious characters." Under the umbrella of US military protection such as the neutron bomb, Germany is flexing its imperialist muscles, leasing one-tenth of Zaire from Mobutu, much of which is to be used as a missile testing ground. West Germany is involved in plans to transport white Rhodesian settlers from a soon-to-be-liberated Zimbabwe to development projects in Bolivia. It has made major investments and payments to the Zionist state of Israel while at the same time encouraging the rise of anti-Semitic and neo-Nazi movements of the same type as that which developed around Nazi war criminal Herbert Kappler, who was smuggled back to Germany from a prison hospital in Rome. And like other European imperialist powers, West Germany has based much of its internal economy on the importation of nationally oppressed workers from Southern Europe, North Africa, and Asia.

All this is background for the development of RAF, referred to as the Baader-Meinhof gang after its founders Ulrike Meinhof and Andreas Baader. The RAF and other armed organizations grew out of the militant mass movements in the 1960's of young German students and workers who opposed imperialism and rejected the opportunist, revisionist leadership of the Euro-communist old-left parties and organizations. The RAF and other organizations throughout Europe developed specifically in solidarity with the national liberation struggles of the Indochinese and Palestinian peoples. The RAF undertook armed actions against the US military presence in Germany and its role in the genocidal war against the Vietnamese nation. Following a 1972 attack on a US Army computer complex which programmed bombing runs over North Vietnam, RAF members were asked by the press, "whether you have by now recognized violence against things and human beings

... doesn't produce solidarity but is repulsive, or do you want to continue it?" In a jointly drafted reply the RAF said:

The question is: Repulsive to whom? In Hanoi our pictures were hung on sidewalk fences, because the bombing in Heidelberg for which the RAF took responsibility has destroyed a computer which had programmed and directed US bombing runs against North Vietnam. American officers and soldiers and politicians felt repulsed because they felt reminded of Vietnam, not secure anymore in the rear area. This results from the structure of imperialism: that it must secure its power basis, domestic and foreign, in the metropolis and in the Third World primarily by military means, through military alliances, military intervention, counter guerrilla and "internal security"—enlargement of its power apparatus internally. In the face of imperialism's potential for violence there is no revolutionary politics without solving the question of violence in each phase of revolutionary organizing."

RAF fighters have engaged in bank expropriations, bombings, kidnappings, and in recent years have developed a high level of solidarity and co-ordination with Palestinian freedom fighters. The actions of the RAF have demonstrated the importance of the leading role of women in anti-imperialist struggle in oppressor nations around the world.

In the United States and in Europe, opportunist forces like the *Guardian* have united with the imperialist state, blaming the anti-imperialist fighters for the fascist repression developing in Germany, and branding the RAF as anarchists and terrorists. These politics abandon and reject the responsibility of the white left in this country to defend and be in solidarity with these comrades who are under attack. Such a sweeping condemnation of the RAF cuts off our ability to learn important lessons from the revolutionary movements in Europe, concerning the history and practice of oppressor nation solidarity with the

Vietnamese, African and especially the Palestinian national liberation struggles; and about the leading role of women in anti-imperialist solidarity and in the fight against the imperialist/capitalist state at all levels.

PFOC believes that anti-imperialists must take up support for the RAF prisoners of war. We need to expose imperialism's counter-revolutionary offensive which is aimed primarily at national liberation struggles in an attempt to discredit and destroy them as "terrorists." We do not take up this history and the defense of the remaining RAF fighters and the need to support the call to investigate and expose

the German government for its counter-revolutionary terror, in order to engage in a full analysis or exposition of the political lines, views and practice of the RAF and other armed revolutionary groups in Europe. This task is beyond the scope of this introduction, although it is important. PFOC is reprinting the Russell Emergency Conference materials in an effort to begin identifying and building solidarity with internationalism which is under severe attack. PFOC and all progressive and revolutionary forces must place the responsibility for the murders where it clearly lies—with the imperialist state and its carefully orchestrated campaign against revolutionaries.

(EXCERPTS)

Emergency International Russell Tribunals

Andreas Baader, Gudrun Ensslin and Jan Carl Raspe have been murdered. Irmgard Möller survived this massacre, but her life is in danger. Up until now there were only three visits of her lawyers allowed.

Statement of Jutta Bahr-Jendges (Irmgard's lawyer):

"... during the night from Monday to Tuesday at about four o'clock in the morning Irmgard Moller heard noises in the corridor. She called loudly and had the impression that Jan Carl Raspe answered. Shortly afterwards at about 4:30 a.m., she was unconscious. When she woke up again, she found herself lying on a barrow with blood all over her. Irmgard Moller did not know up until Saturday that Jan Carl Raspe was dead. She did only see her lawyer five days after the events. Irmgard Moller said that there is a possibility of gas polluting the cells..."

The International Committee investigating the circumstances of Ulrike Meinhof's death came to the solution that she could not have killed herself.

The method to cover up murder by calling it suicide is in accordance with what has become known about CIA research projects: Already in 1961 the CIA started to build up a constantly present murder potential, which means the breeding of murder commandos. Furthermore they investigated the operative use of drugs and other chemical biological remedies in order to eliminate political enemies through so-called suicides or accidents.

By analyzing the negotiations the prisoners had with the Federal Chancellor's Office just the day before their death, one can see that the power of decision was in their hands. The Federal Chancellor's Office, which is headed by Manfred Schuler, is the coordination office of the German Federal Intelligence Services, which have been built up after 1945 in the Federal Republic of Germany by the CIA. Which means that it was also right there where the decision to kill the prisoners was made. The prisoners left three letters for Schuler in case of their execution. We demand that these letters are published.

The project of eliminating the prisoners has been prepared over a long period of time: By a lengthy hunger strike of the prisoners—during which at last 100 prisoners had joined—the Baden Wurttemberg Ministry of Justice was forced to accept the demands of the prisoners and the medical experts to concentrate the political prisoners immediately—also the prisoners from other parts of the Federal Republic of Germany and start to extend the prison ward.

More than two months later eight prisoners were granted to see and communicate with each other for four hours a day in Stammheim Prison (Andreas Baader, Gudrun Ensslin, Jan Carl Raspe, Irmgard Möller, Ingrid Schubert, Wolfgang Beer, Werner Hoppe, and Helmut Pohl).

solidarity with the



no photo of
Ulrike
meinhof
murdered
by the
state while
in prison



red army faction



Jan Carl Raspe, Gudrun Ensslin and Andreas Baader (bottom row) were assassinated in prison.

Because of these measures there was a minimal control over each others lives. On the 8th of August the prisoners were attacked by a police commando of 40 pigs, beaten brutally and again totally isolated. With this development the five year long struggle of the prisoners for better prison conditions was thrown right back to the beginning point. In spite of the hunger and thirst strike lasting for 24 days the isolation was not ended, but on the contrary the government was talking about letting the prisoners die and tore apart the group of eight prisoners. Werner Hoppe, Wolfgang Beer, Helmut Pohl and Ingrid Schubert were deported to other jails. Amnesty International, the Russell Peace Foundation and the World's Church Council intervened without success. It was obvious that the responsible persons in the Federal Republic of Germany were planning to act according to the NATO Anti-Subversive warfare strategy, where one can find under the title "elimination of the leaders" the following statement: "... to eliminate the leaders. Without leaders small groups tend to fall apart or break up because of internal differences, which is positive for the Security Forces." The murder of the prisoners—the final solution—in Stammheim was directly ahead.

In this situation on the 5th of September Schleyer was kidnapped. After it already had been attempted to kill the lawyers working in the Bureau Croissant by a bomb attack, the lawyer Armin Newerla and his co-worker Joachim Dellwo were arrested at the end of August, on the third of October the lawyer Arndt Muller and Gabriele Heim were interned and Volker Speitel and Rosemarie Pries were arrested on their way back from Denmark. All the arrested comrades were members of the International Defense Committee for Political Prisoners, Section W-Germany, all of them were working in Russell-Groups concerning the situation of the political prisoners here.

In the course of the numerous searches in the lawyer's bureau and in homes of comrades working in the office most of the material in reference to the situation of the political prisoners, which was meant for the Russell-Tribunal and Amnesty International was confiscated.

They also confiscated defense documents for the trials by calling them "stiffs".

On the 14th of October the workers left in the lawyer's office had to move the last material and documents out of the office by order of the Criminal Bureau. This means the almost complete destruction of political defense in W-Germany.

The exclusion of public control over the situation of the political prisoners was "legalized" afterwards by pushing the new "non-contact law" rapidly through the parliament.

"The terrorists should know, that the killing of Hanns-Martin Schleyer, will have negative effects on the imprisoned terrorists." (President of Ministers, Kuhn, Welt 14.9.77)

On the 18th of October Gudrun Ensslin, Andreas Baader and Jan-Carl Raspe were murdered.

The attempt of the SPD to integrate the Russell Tribunal as a "Tribunal against Berufsverbote" in their strategy has failed now by the physical elimination of their opposition. The tribunal will also include the offences against human rights in the treatment of the political prisoners, which means elimination programs by total isolation and the murder of Holger Meins, Siegfried Hausner, Katharina Hammerschmidt, Ulrike Meinhof, Gudrun Ensslin, Jan-Carl Raspe and Andreas Baader.

This is why the SPD and especially Brandt are trying to stop the tribunal on the offences against human rights in the Federal Republic of Germany. "I will tell the initiators in London that they are not welcome in W-Germany and W-Berlin for this occasion." (Brandt 13.10)

We are of the opinion that it is absolutely necessary to call for a Russell-Emergency Conference, where the following points should be discussed:

- the massacre in Stammheim and the non-contact law
- the destruction of political defense and the pursuit of Russell-Groups
- Mogadishu: the attack of the GSG 9 (anti-terrorist special group), the murder of three Palestine comrades, international cooperation (active involvement of the SAS, for example)
- man hunt and hysteria in Germany and other European countries.

We ask you to initiate new Russell-Groups working on these offences against human rights. Which means to collect material, publish and forward it to the Russell Tribunal. In this conference there should not only be the groups which have already been working on this subject over a long period of time, but all people who want to make the facts known in public.

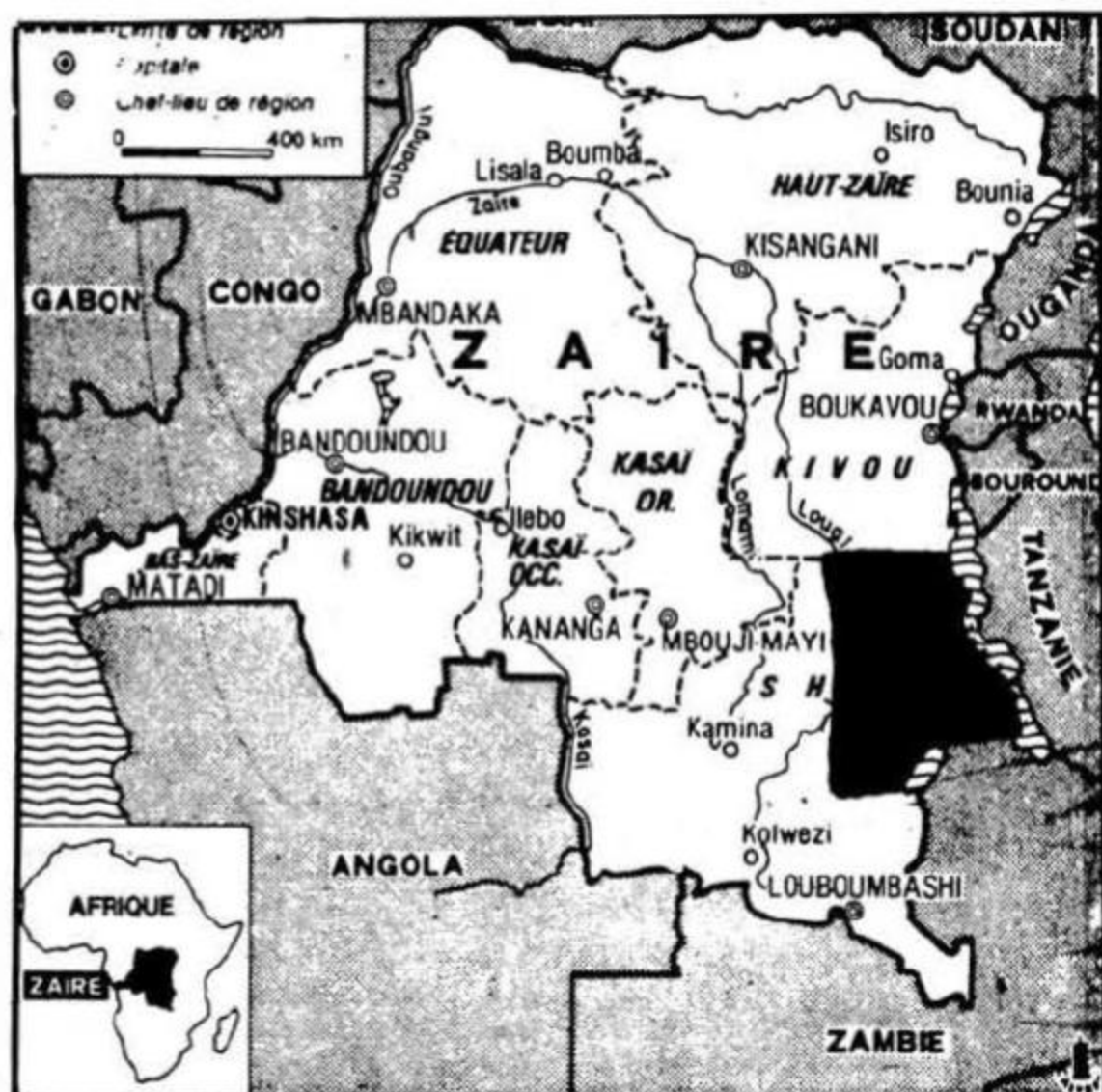
We demand that all Russell-Groups support the demands of the political prisoners for concentration in association groups of at least 15 prisoners—which means the application of the minimum guarantees of



Surviving Palestinian fighter who participated in a plane hijacking to demand the release of imprisoned RAF members. German commandos killed and captured the Palestinian guerrillas in a raid on the Mogadishu airport in Somalia.

GERMAN IMPERIALISM IN AFRICA

One tenth of Zaire, in the heart of Africa, has been "leased" by Germany as a rocket range. Germany has complete control over the area, which borders Zambia, Tanzania, and the Shaba province of Zaire.



credit: PTS/Arbeiterkampf

the Geneva Convention.

We are sure that Gudrun, Andreas and Jan have been murdered and that it was attempted to murder Irmgard.

As the only one who survived the massacre on the seventh floor in the Stammheim jail Irmgard's life is immediately endangered.

"Irmgard Möller declares: at no time was there any agreement of common suicide between Andreas Baader, Gudrun Ensslin, Jan-Carl Raspe and herself. She has not attempted to commit suicide. She did not inflict herself by four punctures in the right side of her breast. Her last perceptions before she became unconscious were two explosion noises and a squeezing noise. This was on Tuesday, 18th October 1977 at about 4:30 a.m.

"Except of two visits of her lawyer on the 22nd and 24th of October Irmgard Moller has not had any contact with her lawyer up until today. Furthermore she has no newspapers and no radio. She did not know about the death of Raspe, Baader and Ensslin and the events at Mogadishu Airport until she was told by her lawyer during the first visit." (Press statement by her lawyer, Jutta Bahr-Jendges)

The version of the W-German state authorities masking three murders and one attempted murder as suicides, "to push of the position of the sympathizers" (Herold) was already tried after the murder of Ulrike Meinhof.

After the murders in Stammheim the International Commission for the Investigation of the circumstances of Ulrike Meinhof's death declared publicly that Ulrike Meinhof could not have committed suicide. The case of Irmgard Möller shows that the authorities are determined to carry out their project of physical destruction of the RAF prisoners.

Although her period of detention, which was 4-1/2 years, is over since half a year, she is still in jail (internment) just because of the statement of the chief witness Muller, whose incredibility was confirmed by the court in Kaiserslautern.

The only reason for this measure is her planned murder; therefore the total isolation is still carried on in spite of the information to the contrary by the state authorities.

On 22nd October the period of non-contact was formally ended by the Secretary for Justice, Vogel. It is a fact, however, that nothing changed except visits of lawyers and relatives can take place again; that means: no contact with other prisoners, no newspapers (or just censored ones), no radio, etc.

We ask the anti-fascist, socialist, communist and democratic force here and abroad, especially the Russell-Groups fighting against the violations of human rights in West Germany, to enforce the release of Irmgard Moller by publishing the fact that political prisoners have been murdered in W-German jails.

WE DEMAND THE IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF IRMGARD MÖLLER!

WE DEMAND AN APPEAL FOR AN INTERNATIONAL INVESTIGATION COMMITTEE TO SOLVE THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE ASSASSINATIONS AND THE ATTEMPTED MURDER IN STAMMHEIM!

WE ARE PLANNING AN INTERNATIONAL ACTION DAY FOR THE RELEASE OF IRMGARD MOLLER AND FOR THE CONCENTRATION OF POLITICAL PRISONERS IN ASSOCIATION GROUPS OF AT LEAST FIFTEEN ON DECEMBER 10, 1977.

Coordination and Contact Office:

Verlag Ergebnisse und Perspektiven, Hamburger Allee 59,
6 Frankfurt 90, tel. 0611-5972565

All participants of the Russell Emergency Conference

Dear Comrades,

On the 5th and 6th of November a Russell Emergency Conference took place in Frankfurt organized by various Russell-Groups and other organizations because of the assassinations of Gudrun, Andreas and Jan (see the Appeal for a national Russell Emergency Conference.)

During this conference a coordination committee was initiated (the first meeting took place on November 10, 1977). This committee should make the cooperation of all these groups fighting against the most serious violations of the human rights in the Federal Republic of Germany—strategy of destruction and the elimination of political prisoners—possible.

During the conference six groups were created working on the following subject: the contradictions in the suicide propaganda of the state apparatus and the murders in their political context.

Group 1

The prison conditions of the political prisoners

- a) the non-contact period for the preparation of the killings
- b) campaign for the application of the minimum guarantees of the Geneva Convention, which means the concentration of political prisoners in groups of at least 15.

Group 2

Investigation of the Stammheim events

Group 3

International connections of the Federal Republic of Germany

Model Germany for West Europe:

that means the political situation of the Federal Republic of Germany during the time between Schleyer's kidnapping up until the assassinations
for example the immediate intervention of the SAS in Mogadishu
the relationship between W-Germany and Somalia

Group 4

Psychological warfare

propagandistic preparation of the killings

Group 5

The policy of the small and big emergency staff, which means the policy of that team that made the decisions

- a) not to exchange the prisoners under any circumstances
- b) the attack of the GSG 9 in Mogadishu
- c) sacrificing Schleyer

Group 6

Man hunt

Measures in Germany and abroad
Cooperation of German and foreign authorities



credit: In These Times

Hans-Martin Schleyer, "former" Nazi and a high-ranking German imperialist, was captured by RAF forces to enforce their demands for the release of their imprisoned comrades. Schleyer was executed when RAF demands were met with the assassination of jailed RAF members.

We ask you to help us

- by sending us material concerning the cooperation of your authorities in Germany concerning the man hunt (we heard for example that an identity control in Paris was carried out by German civilian police)
- by publishing the two enclosed resolutions
- by sending letters to the Russell Peace Foundation demanding the investigation of the murders of Jan, Andreas and Gudrun
- by creating Russell-Committees on the following subject:

The role of W-Germany for West Europe

The murder of Ingrid Schubert shows that not only Irmgard's life is immediately endangered, because of her being the only survivor of the massacre, but that all of the lives of the political prisoners who are members of the RAF are endangered, because of the state policy to eliminate them.

It is necessary to mobilize broadly in order to organize demonstrations and meetings on this subject all over Europe on this day.

- we are asking all the participants of the conference, all foreign groups and organizations to stand up for the lives of the political prisoners in W-Germany and to organize a day of international solidarity with the imprisoned comrades.

We ask the foreign left organizations and groups to send information concerning their activities to protect the lives of the political prisoners in the Federal Republic of Germany to the coordination Committee.

Posters for the European Action Day can be ordered from the coordination committee.

Resolution

On November 26/27, 1977 the Second Emergency Conference of the "Russell-Groups working on the Clarification of the Murder in Stammheim and Stadelheim took place in Frankfurt.

Since the first Russell Emergency Conference the development in the Westgerman prisons has shown that the destruction of political prisoners is continued rapidly by the Westgerman Security Authorities:

On November 12, 1977 Ingrid Schubert—another cadre member of the RAF—was murdered in the isolation ward of Stadelheim prison.

After the assassination of the cadres it becomes known how the Chief Prosecutor's Office is planning to continue their strategy of the final solution:

After the lawyers of the prisoners have been imprisoned, excluded or are prohibited to practice their profession, after Claus Croissant—since he has been extradited from France—is included into the murderous calculation of the Chief Prosecutor's Office: the Regional Minister of Interior Conference on November 24, 1977 decides the "integration of the political prisoners into the normal execution of punishment."

That means:

- by moving the political prisoners into 90 different prisons they are trying to make collective resistance impossible
- locking up the prisoners out of the guerrilla together with prisoners selected and prepared by the Federal Criminal Bureau. This is the continuation of the strategy of final solution, how it is practised in Italian and American prisons and how it has been practised under Hitler by the Secret State Police—prisoners from the concentration camps would be moved to regular prisons in order to be killed. In the USA black militants are locked up together with white racists, which means their certain death. In Italy revolutionaries are locked up together with mafiosi. So far one comrade has been stabbed to death, another one was seriously injured.
- the "calm and firm affirmation of normality" (Brandt) in the normal execution of punishment or how the Dusseldorf Chief of State Attorney puts it, that he is trying to reverse the impression of the public that political prisoners have a special status.

For the prisoners this means: that all that, which they have fought for in four collective hunger strikes against the destruction programme of the Chief Prosecutor's Office, will be destroyed: association with each other, the possibility to work together, etc.

The special perfidy within this "integration programme" is, that the demand of the three first collective hunger strikes was "an end to the isolation" which meant the integration into the normal execution of punishment, which is used now and turned against the prisoners. During the third hunger strike with this demand Holger Meins was murdered by starvation; in October 1975 the Federal Law Court reacted to the hunger strike of the political prisoners by legalizing a lawless state of permanent emergency, in which the prisoners can be tortured and murdered, because "it is only a very small minority within the public". (Decision of the Federal Law Court)

Considering the fact that the state conducts the dispute in the lawless state of permanent emergency, the prisoners consequently demanded prison conditions according to the Statutes in the Geneva Convention in their fourth hunger strike.

We, the groups and initiatives present at the Second Russell Emergency Conference, support the demands of the political prisoners for prison conditions according to the minimum guarantees of the Geneva Convention for prisoners of war . . .

Prisoners from anti-imperialist resistance groups, fighting in the German Federal Republic should be treated in accordance with the minimum guarantees of the Geneva Convention of 1949, here especially Art. 3,4,13, 17 and 130, which means:

- immediate release of Irmgard Möller and Günter Sonnenberg
- concentration of the political prisoners in association groups of at least 15 prisoners.

Furthermore we demand the creation of an independent international investigation commission for the clarification of the murder in Stammheim and Stadelheim, the attempted murder on Irmgard Moller, as well as the determination of the political responsibility for the murder.

Press Statement

Today, Saturday, November 26, 1977 five members of the Russell Groups Wiesbaden and Hamburg were stopped by six armed policemen on the motorway Wiesbaden-Frankfurt for a "person and vehicle control." The members of the Russell Groups were on their way to the Second Russell Emergency Conference. A lot of material for the preparation of the Russell Tribunal was "confiscated" without giving any reasons—that means it was robbed.

An exact list of the confiscated material was not given, even though the police was asked to do so several times. Only a small piece of paper was handed over, on which was stated: "today . . . written notes were confiscated out of the vehicle . . . exact lists will be given later."

After:

- Armin Newerla and several members of Russell Groups were lifted after a meeting for the preparation of the Russell Tribunal
- documents and material to the situation of the political prisoners meant for the Russell Tribunal have been confiscated in the course of house ratings (raids) in various cities of the Federal Republic
- Willy Brandt and the SPD leadership have condemned the Russell Tribunal and Willy Brandt has stated, that persons, working within the Russell Tribunal are not welcome in the Federal Republic of Germany and Maihofer declared "the government thinks that such a mock trial of forces that are against the German statutes, is just a derision of the liberal lawful state" and "terroristic violent criminals and groups supporting them" are using the Tribunal "in order to support their criminal goals" (Frankfurter Rundschau November 21, 1977)
- members of the Russell Groups in Kaiserslautern and Vienna have been arrested and criminalized

This recent confiscation of a lot of working material to the situation of the political prisoners and to the murder in Stammheim and Stadelheim is just another step in the attempt of the Westgerman Authorities to obstruct the work within the Russell Tribunal, especially of those Russell Groups working on the most extreme forms of violations against the Convention of Human Rights—the torture and murder of political prisoners—in the Federal Republic of Germany.

This emphasizes the necessity for all groups, organizations and Russell-Initiatives to work more on the subject of the murder in Stammheim and Stadelheim, to publish all their resolutions and all informations on the prison conditions of the political prisoners.



Women's Liberation And Imperialism

PAMPHLET BY PRAIRIE FIRE ORGANIZING
COMMITTEE

The women's liberation movement is a central part of the revolutionary struggle in the US. The urgency of developing anti-imperialist analysis and a strategy for the women's movement is increasing. This pamphlet is an effort to build such an analysis: it is about women's oppression and the struggle for women's liberation under imperialism. Single copies are 50c plus 25c postage, 10 or more copies 30c each plus 15% postage. Free to prisoners. Please make checks payable to John Brown Book Club. **Breakthrough**, the political journal of PFOC, and other materials are also available. For more information, write: John Brown Book Club, P.O. Box 40614, Station C, San Francisco, CA 94110.

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WHO WE ARE

Prairie Fire Organizing Committee is a communist organization of women and men based in the US oppressor nation. Our politics, revolutionary anti-imperialism, are rooted in a dialectical and historical materialism, the science and ideology of Marxism-Leninism. We are struggling to apply this science to the realities and conditions of US imperialism, to develop revolutionary strategy, practice and organization within the oppressor nation working class in order to build socialist revolution in solidarity with national liberation movements which are leading the worldwide defeat of imperialism. We are committed to building active solidarity with national liberation struggles—to support the right of self-determination for oppressed nations inside and outside current US borders. We believe that a determined and continual struggle against the material structures and institutions of white supremacy is required in order for the oppressor nation working class to develop proletarian internationalist consciousness and practice.

We also believe that imperialism depends on the oppression of women which is institutionalized in the system of male supremacy. Within the oppressor nation working class, women are the leading anti-imperialist force. The oppression of lesbians and gay men under imperialism is integral to the system of male supremacy. Lesbian and gay liberation must be fought for as part of the struggle for women's liberation.

Only by struggling for national liberation and women's liberation and against white supremacy and male supremacy can the oppressor nation working class build revolutionary class struggle which can contribute to overturning the entire system of class exploitation and imperialism. Only by struggling against all forms of opportunism which liquidate the struggle for national liberation and women's liberation can we lay the basis for building a revolutionary communist party within the oppressor nation. A revolutionary communist party based upon a commonly shared, correct politics is absolutely necessary in order to lead the working class in a struggle which can defeat imperialism. We are committed to building such a party. At this stage, uniting people around anti-imperialist politics and doing practice which demonstrates the meaning of that politics in the world is the central task for white communists. We see our political journal, *Breakthrough*, as playing an important role in the struggle for anti-imperialist politics.

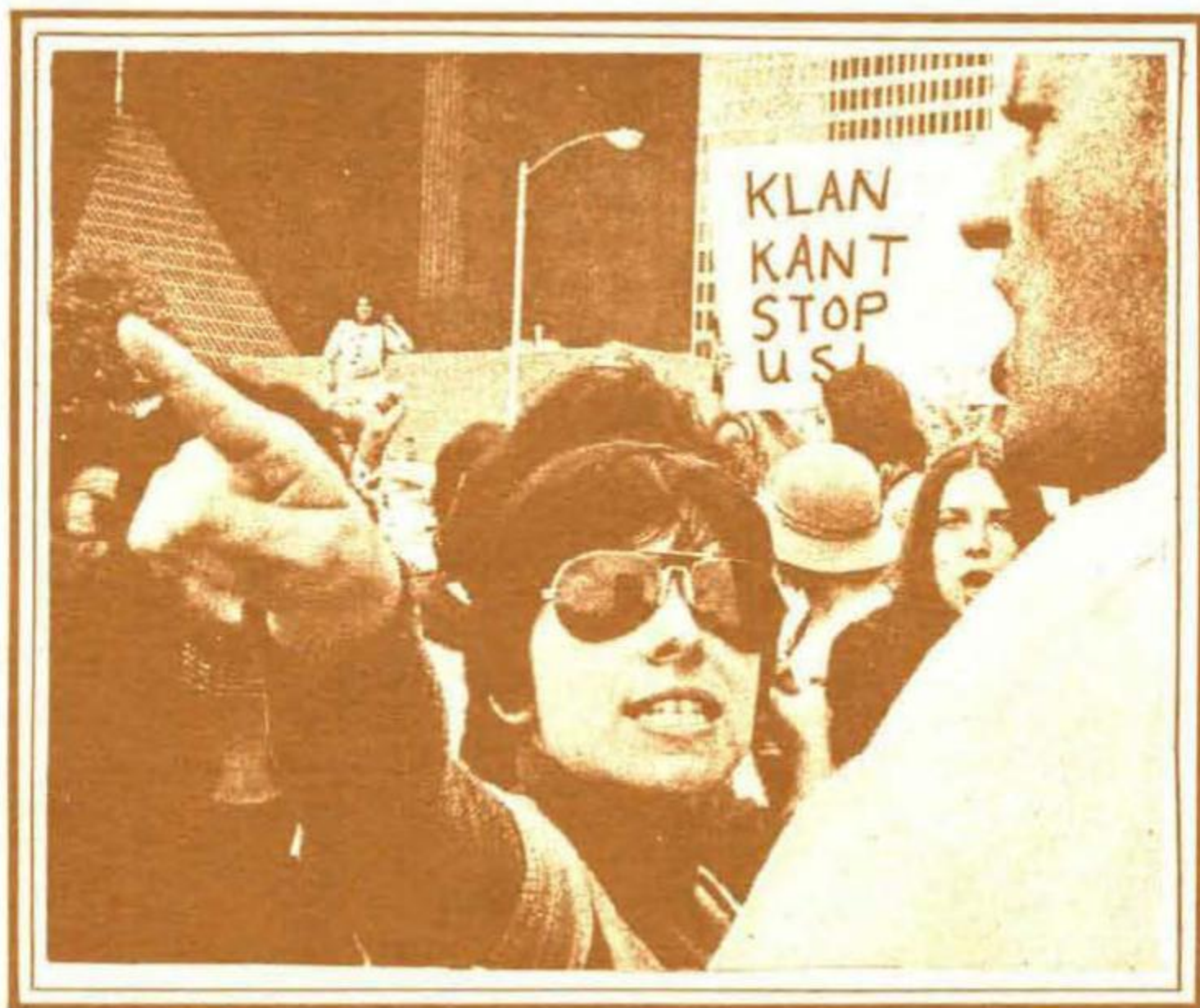
We are trying to implement our politics in the prison solidarity movement, in the international solidarity movements, in the women's and gay movements and in communities and workplaces. We understand that revolutionary theory must guide revolutionary practice and that only practice can test the correctness of theory. We also understand that the overthrow of imperialism depends on the waging of armed struggle against the US imperialist State in solidarity with the wars of national liberation raging around the world.

We rely on the principles of democratic centralism and criticism/self-criticism to help determine, evaluate and correct our practice. We are committed to fighting against all forms of opportunism, national and male chauvinism, competition and arrogance among ourselves as an organization and within the oppressor nation. We want to be accountable to national liberation movements, the women's movement and the white anti-imperialist movement for our politics and work. This means politicizing and learning from our advances and victories as well as our setbacks and defeats. We want to unite with all those who oppose opportunist politics and practice and are determined to fight US imperialism.

BREAKTHROUGH

POLITICAL JOURNAL OF PRAIRIE FIRE ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S YEAR



BUILD ON THE VICTORIES OF HOUSTON